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ARTHUR GIFFITHS

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# FIFTY YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE

BY

MAJOR ARTHUR GRIFFITHS

LATE 68th (NOW THE MANCHESTER) REGIMENT

FORMERLY H.M. INSPECTOR OF PRISONS; AUTHOR OF "MEMORIALS OF MILLBANK "

"CHRONICLES OF NEWGATE," "MYSTERIES OF POLICE AND CRIME "

"WELLINGTON AND WATERLOO," ETC.

With Portrait

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To

MY BEST AND TRUEST FRIEND

MY WIFE



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# FIFTY YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY DAYS.

A Soldier by Birth and Environment—At a Public School—Short Commons—Welcome Tips—Athletics—What was Taught—Outbreak of the Crimean War—Offer of a Commission—At Sandhurst—A Visit to the Regimental Agents: "Sebastopol will soon Fall"—At the Regimental Dépôt—Practical Joking and a Bayonet Charge—A Quaint Drill-Sergeant—A Terrifying Colonel.

I AM a soldier's son, born in an Indian garrison (December 9th, 1838), a soldier's grandson, with a host of relatives, near and distant, and as I write this I gaze at family portraits and miniatures in uniforms of a bygone day. My earliest associations were with soldiers: a soldier's wife was my nurse; my father's orderly carried me on his shoulders at the immature age of three to the dame school where I learnt my A, B, C; my favourite toys were a wooden sword and the buttons off an old regimental coat.

Fortune cast my lines still more deeply in the same groove. I lived as a child surrounded by military traditions. My home was at Douglas, Isle of Man, in those days a favourite retreat for old officers, veterans of the Peninsula, India, and Waterloo. There was one lame major whose limp was caused by a still unextracted French bullet; his story sent a thrill through me whenever I heard it. He had distinguished himself in one fierce fight by tearing the King's colour from its staff and wrapping it round his body

sooner than surrender it to his foe. I thought everyone should lift his hat to him when he passed, but he was no more noticed in our place than he had been by his superiors in the past. Another gallant warrior I followed with admiring eyes when I met him was an Indian General, who had survived the massacres in the first Afghan War, and had helped to defend Jellalabad.

Early school days helped to increase my predilection for the profession of arms. My first master had been a lieutenant in a cavalry regiment through the campaign against Suchet in Catalonia in 1811-12. His sabre and crimson sash hung conspicuously on the mantelpiece in his study, and he would descant by the hour upon marches and skirmishes on the Llobregat and the Ebro.

Then I went to a public school, such as it was. Gauged by modern ideas it was a rough and ready, Spartan institution, run on bare, economical lines. There was no pampering, rather the reverse; the food was of the plainest, and altogether missed the variety and succulence of the boarding school of the present day. Tea with bread and butter for breakfast, the same in the evening at five, our last meal, a dinner at 1 p.m. of plain meat and potatoes with puddings twice a week, was the sum total of our daily rations. No bread was given at dinner, and I remember that a special exception was made in my favour, as, with boyish daintiness, I loathed potatoes. The gourmands among us who could afford it provided their own pickles, jams, and other luxuries, which were not allowed upon the table but kept under the seat. The craving for variety in food—the want of food indeed, for we often went starving—led us to much petty pilfering in the house and abroad. We made love to the buxom cook for slabs of stony stuff: the broken pieces of the pudding we called “Golly,” the “Goliath,” or colossal roly-poly of treacle, given us on Thursdays, and we scrambled for any scraps of food about to be thrown to the pigs. We set traps for thrushes and sparrows, we ranged the fields for beans, turnips, potatoes (I could eat them when stolen), which we cooked for ourselves on the study or play-room fire. The secret of the hiding places for saucepans and

frying pans was handed down as a tradition from generation to generation—the movable plank in the floor or wainscot, the hole cut in the wall; so, too, the culinary skill and the most cunning recipes were passed on from boy to boy. One was a famous concoction for making pancakes, often as thick and tasteless as bits of blanket; another, developed almost to a fine art, was the manufacture of toffee. One boy was specially clever with his fingers, and we were willing to believe that, as he put it himself, he could make anything, from steam engines to raspberry jam, if only he had the tools.

General short commons was emphasised by chronic shortness of cash. Every spare farthing, and there were few enough to spare, went in the purchase of "tuck." The weekly pocket money, the sum of sixpence being the highest limit, did not go far; apple tarts a penny each, barley cakes hot from the griddle, oranges and sweetstuff, were dear luxuries, and in my nearly constant impecuniosity rare to come by. My dear mother used sometimes to send me a shilling by the driver who came from our neighbourhood, some ten miles distant, bringing the drawing-master to the school one day a week for work; and in Castletown, a mile away, courts were held once a month which my brother-in-law, a lawyer from Douglas, regularly attended. On the great day, the first Thursday in the month, I started precisely at twelve, when school broke up, to run to the Court House to win my brother-in-law's eye. I was never disappointed of the welcome tip which was awaiting me. My punctual appearance was quite a joke with the whole court, and his Honour the Deemster would smilingly wait, even if my brother-in-law was on his legs and speaking, till the eagerly expected douceur was slipped into my hand. A boy never forgets his early benefactors, and I was glad in after years to be of some service to this brother-in-law when he sought and gained the appointments of Clerk or Master of the Rolls in the Isle of Man.

My school days were passed before the pursuit of games was developed into the great cult, long since established amongst us, but we played cricket assiduously, and could



engaged, took their toll of them. One gallant survivor, I may mention, is Field-Marshal Sir George White, V.C.

With all this I had no hope of entering the army. The road was barred by want of means. Commissions without purchase were difficult to come by in the pre-Crimean days, and already an elder brother had been launched into the profession of arms. There were few openings then for a lad leaving school, and my choice was strictly limited: a stool in my lawyer brother-in-law's office in Douglas; or, if I could win a scholarship—and my position in school rather warranted the hope—I might find my way to a degree at Oxford or Cambridge and a curacy or junior mastership. Artistic tastes since developed pointed to painting, but art was a precarious livelihood then, unless backed by the finest talents.

While I waited, still doubtful as to my future, the Crimean War broke upon us. We sat one evening at tea in the dining-hall, and the head-master came in to tell us of the victory of the Alma. Our cheers were still louder for Balaklava, and Inkerman stirred us to wild enthusiasm. Then, as fifty years later, every thought was for the war. Classical studies were neglected; even the military historians, Livy, Xenophon and Thucydides were tame reading compared to the letters of the then new product, the war correspondent. Excitement deepened into feverish anxiety when the winter came and the most harrowing stories were published of the sufferings of our troops upon the dreary heights before Sebastopol. The whole countryside was eager to send help, and, returning home for the Christmas holidays, I tumbled upon a family party intent on knitting mufflers and cardigans for the men at the front.

Within a few minutes of my arrival home the war came still closer to me. I caught a meaning look on my father's face, as he asked my mother, "Shall I tell him?" and a sad look on hers as she answered, "I would rather you did not accept it." "It" was the offer of a commission at once, provided I could pass the necessary examination. I had no doubt myself, although my knowledge of military subjects was *nil*, but I was a good

classical scholar, fair at mathematics, and knew some French. A month later I came successfully through the ordeal at Sandhurst.

It had been a busy month, for I had to cram all I could hold upon field fortification and logarithms, and Chepmell's "Universal History." Dr. Chepmell was a Military College Professor, who himself examined us, and thought that history, ancient and modern, meant nothing but dates. I shall remember till I die the date of the Siege of Troy (as given by Chepmell), the battles of Mantinea, Clontarf, Tannenberg, and many more, although the knowledge has been of little service to me through life. A short half hour seemed to satisfy the examiners that I knew quite enough to become food for powder. Only the doctor looked askance at my boyish face, for I was only a few weeks past sixteen, and had been suffering quite recently from illness. They were more compassionate, however, than inquisitorial; indeed, there was nothing wrong with me, but I was advised to go home and nurse my cold. They were easy-going enough, the medical examinations, in those days. A contemporary, whom I still meet at my club, got through with flying colours, and although some doubts of his eyesight were hazarded he was passed. At the door he turned and said, "I think I ought to tell you that I've got a glass eye," but they did not go back upon their decision. Another story will cap this. It is that of a candidate with rather inferior powers of vision, who implored the man who went in just before to tell him exactly what happened. The latter reported that he was taken to the window and desired to say what he saw 'in the street. It was a 'bus passing, drawn by grey horses. When our friend's turn came he was asked exactly the same question and gave exactly the same reply. "What!" cried the doctor, "you can see that omnibus?" (which was just turning the corner). "You must have uncommon long sight! You're all right."

I had not long to wait for my commission. Three days after passing the Sandhurst ordeal, I was gazetted to the 63rd West Suffolk Regiment, now the 1st Battalion of the Manchesters, a corps which did fine work in South Africa,



and especially in Ladysmith. The regiment had been sorely tried in the Crimea, and suffered very severely at Inkerman. Worse happened to it in the winter that followed, as will presently appear.

My first visit as a full-fledged commissioned officer was, at my father's bidding, to the regimental agent's, Mr. E. S. Codd, of Fludyer Street, on which, by the way, a part of the offices of the Local Government Board now stand. The locality was the favourite lounge for the recruiting sergeants, and one of them paid me the compliment of offering me the Queen's shilling. My indignant answer was to draw myself up to my full height and say that I was already (by a few hours) an officer in the 63rd Regiment, whereat the sergeant apologised humbly, and gave me my first military salute, at which I walked on with the air of a conqueror. I was again humiliated, however, on reaching the office in Fludyer Street, for as I stood at the counter, outwardly brave, but really overcome with shyness, dear old Mr. Codd came to me himself, saying, "And who might you be, young sir?" Then, when I declared my name and quality, Mr. Codd laughed aloud and, calling back to his head clerk within, cried: "Alfred! Sebastopol will soon fall! Come and look at the last reinforcement!" This was the beginning of what grew from mere business into the most affectionate relations, and I was so eager to show my gratitude that I promised Mr. Codd he should have my regiment—when I got one. Under the old arrangements, the agency of a regiment was in the gift of the general who held the "full" colonelcy. It was in this way that the Duke of York laid the foundation of the brilliant success of a certain great firm who he always said were erroneously styled his bankers. "The real truth is, I am theirs; for I always have more of their money than they of mine."

A second visit, surreptitious and clandestine, was to the Horse Guards. My father had promised my mother that if it could possibly be managed I should not be gazetted to a regiment in the Crimea. That very morning he had announced his intention of seeking a transfer for me to one in India or the Colonies. This did not suit my ideas at all,

and, returning by the way of Whitehall, I ventured boldly into the precincts of headquarters, and asked for an interview with a great Staff Officer, who was a friend of my father's, and to whom I knew the application for transfer would be made later. He received me with much *bonhomie*, and promptly assured me that I would certainly go to the Crimea. "They want officers too badly to spare even such a mite as you. You may tell your father so. But I'm very glad you came. I like your spirit." So did my father, as I firmly believe, but he was a stern disciplinarian, and would not openly approve of what I had done.

The depôt of my regiment was in Ireland, at Birr, in Parsonstown, and thither, when equipped with uniform and outfit, I at once proceeded. My father accompanied me as far as Crewe, the junction for Holyhead, where he diverged to Liverpool, *en route* for the Isle of Man, and left me to continue my journey alone. Our farewells were spoken at the carriage window, in the hearing of my fellow passengers, who rallied me with the customary chaff about the "young bear," and the troubles in store for me.

From Kingstown to Westland Row, then in a car across Dublin to the Kingsbridge Station, and by the Southern and Western line to Ballybrophy, where I was landed in the fast fading light, a forlorn little figure, having no idea how I was to get on to Birr, fourteen miles distant by road. Now I happened upon the first firm friend I made in my long pilgrimage through life, an assistant-surgeon, also bound for Birr, by name Murphy, a handsome, rollicking Irishman, with a rich voice and a cheery manner, who took pity on me, and settled at once that we should join forces and travel on together. It was he who extracted a conveyance out of a ruinous shebeen house that posed as the Railway Hotel, and so hustled the ragged ostler that as we drove away the fellow promised him a skin full of broken bones. Murphy arranged that we should dine at Roscrea, as we should reach Birr too late for mess, and, on driving into the barracks, introduced me at once to a crowd of brother officers in the billiard room, and secured me a bedroom in the canteen.

I was, of course, as shy and shame-faced as a girl, and my heart was sore within me as I made this, my *début* into the military world. My dear old father had fortified me with some very precise instructions as to my procedure, and I had already contravened some of them—one was that I was on no account to allow myself to be parted from my baggage, the brand new, shiny black bullock trunks and portmanteaux that bore my name and regiment in full, and which I had been obliged to abandon at Ballybrophy station, for there was no room for them on the jaunting car, with the promise, I strongly distrusted, that they should follow me on the first opportunity. Again, that I should lodge myself in the canteen would, I felt sure, shock my father (and he afterwards found very serious fault with me for going there), but everyone did it on arrival, and the plan of providing a few bedrooms, of course quite apart from the drinking rooms, was excellent, as the barracks were a couple of miles from the town, and to stay at the hotel would have been expensive.

Another paternal instruction was to call as early as possible upon the adjutant to report myself, but I found it unnecessary, as I was summoned early next day to the orderly room, and put at once upon the mill. There were some seventy youngsters like myself, but mostly older and more advanced in military knowledge; they belonged to several regiments, for Birr was the headquarters of one of the new-fangled *depôt* battalions, a system that long survived, and never gave complete satisfaction, but which is about to be renewed in principle under the latest army scheme. I was too young then to see the defects of the system, although they were very apparent, in the absence of uniform control, in the diversities of methods and interests, when each *depôt* was governed by a comparatively junior regimental officer, and no direct responsibility was imposed upon the superior field officers, who were mostly unattached. The collection of so many youngsters under a small, hardly-worked staff was not calculated to make good officers of us, and I am afraid we gave a good deal of trouble.

We were like a lot of light-hearted schoolboys, and, even in those pre-historic days, "ragging" was not unknown. The same reprehensible practices obtained: "drawing" and "making hay," and packing a youngster's kit for him and labelling it with his home address, as a strong hint to him to take himself off. One night a nasty accident all but occurred; some wags were maltreating a man whose temper was short, and who, to rid himself of his tormentors, charged them with bayonet fixed, and drove them before him round the barrack square. Part of our course of drill was in the manual and platoon exercise, in which we were instructed in our own quarters, and kept a musket (rifles were not then introduced) there for the purpose. No harm was done, but the incident got to the Colonel's ears, and much trouble came of it. Only a year before there had occurred the great scandal of the "*non mi ricordo*" court martial on practical joking in Dublin, and the most stringent orders had been issued summarily forbidding such practices. There were some good men among us as it proved, and I met many a Birr comrade in after life who had risen high in the service. The most distinguished of them all was Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Mansfield Clarke, G.C.B., now Governor of Malta.

There was fun to be got out of the drill, irksome and monotonous though it was, and one of the sergeants was a joy to us from the quaintness of his ways and sayings. I remember him once upbraiding me for looking on the ground. "Look up, sir!" he shouted. "Look up, Mr. Griffiths; why do you look on the ground? Is your father dead? Then look up to Heaven, where you may hope to find him." He had a trick, very good for us no doubt, but which a still painfully shy boy disliked extremely, of making one stand alone in the square, a long distance from the squad of men we were teaching to drill. This was intended to give confidence and strengthen the word of command, but he always began with the same remarks: "Now, sir, speak up. They've got to take the words from you. Don't be afraid, spit it out. You're all by yourself



there, poor Mr. Griffiths! No one to help you, no one to look after you! Show them what you're worth."

The Adjutant visited the squads daily, watching the progress made, but interfered little, and the Colonel commanding still less. He was an awful being, whom we seldom if ever saw, unless specially summoned before him to answer for our sins. It was a terrifying thing to be brought before our Colonel. He was a man of presence, who set his teeth, and a decidedly unamiable look came over his stern face when he was moved to wrath. In truth, he was very easily put out. He was not satisfied with verbal reprimand, although it came freely enough, but when angered he had a trick of putting out his hands and, with a wide movement, sweeping everything off the table before him. On such occasions all who were near fled forthwith from the room, and he was left to cool down alone. Then the adjutant would send in the orderly room clerk to pick up the pieces and restore order, while the Colonel looked on smiling as though nothing had happened. He was at heart the kindest of men, as I had the best reason for knowing, for years afterwards it was my fortune to serve on his staff for a long period, with the pleasantest recollections. But our fear of him as boys extended to private life, and it was rather an ordeal to dine with him, although he had a most charming wife, and was extremely hospitable. I remember in one of the awkward pauses of conversation the talk turned upon archery, which had just been established as an amusement at Birr. "Are you an archer?" said the Colonel's wife, pleasantly, to one of the tongue-tied ensigns at table. "No, ma'am, I'm a Waller of Castle Waller," was the reply.

## CHAPTER II.

## IN THE CRIMEA.

‘A Big Drunk Draft’—Summary Disposal of a Tall Hat—Embarking at Greenhithe—My Comrades—A Drunken Captain and Chief Officer—Delayed at Constantinople—Balacava—Sebastopol—State of the Regiment—Running into Danger—Duty in the Trenches—Repelling Attacks—The Fortunes of War—Sir James Simpson’s Failure to Rise to the Occasion—A Council of War Extraordinary—The Russian Retreat—The Looting of Sebastopol—An Adjutant from the Ranks.

TIME in those days governed everything, for the demands of the Crimean Army were incessant, and drafts of men and officers were being forwarded continually to the front long before they could be called disciplined or instructed. I shall never forget accompanying one of these detachments which marched from Birr to Roscrea, where it was billeted for the night, to proceed next day to Ballybrophy, and there entrain. It was a queer collection, for there were no reserves in those days, and every raw recruit who could be got was bundled out to active service before he had been converted into more than the semblance of a soldier. The net was spread wide, and drew in children (like myself) and middle-aged men; some of the latter, indeed, after they had taken the shilling, were claimed by their wives, who came with their children to the barrack-gate.

It was exactly what Kipling has since called a “big drunk draft,” and Roscrea would not hold them. They ran wild all over the place in all stages of intoxication, and the pickets sent out, most of them drunk too, were perfectly helpless in checking disorder or keeping the men to their billets. We officers, all of us mere lads, did our best, backed up by a few sober old non-commissioned officers, and I have a very lively recollection of our struggles and scuffles as we tried to drive the men to bed, and how we

got very much the worst of it. The Mutiny Act prescribes that "whoso shall strike a superior officer shall suffer death or such other punishment that by general court-martial may be awarded." Very few of our draft would have escaped capital punishment if the law had been enforced, for they knocked us about pretty considerably.

My own turn soon came, and with five subaltern comrades I "got the route," as we called it in those days. But my eager desire to get to the front was all but nipped in the bud, summarily. The Colonel commanding our dépôt had serious doubts whether I could face the hardships of the campaign. He took counsel with the dépôt surgeon, and I believe I should have been detained had I not behaved in an altogether childish and foolish manner before them, so they thought it better not to daunt my ardour. All the way out I was in dread of being stopped. When our transport reached Malta a youngster of my acquaintance came on board and told me with a very long face that I had better not show myself on shore or I should be detained, as he had been till he grew bigger and stronger and fitter for the field. I carried with me a bundle of introductions from my father and his friends, one of which was to the General commanding at Malta. I need hardly say it was never delivered, and I had the proud satisfaction of landing at Balaclava to contribute to the reduction of Sebastopol at the mature age of sixteen years and four months.

Our orders were to embark from Greenhithe. A coach ran from Birr to Tullamore, where I took train for Dublin, from Birr to Tullamore, where I took train for Dublin, happy as a king in the heyday of youth and spirits, and my pockets well lined with cash. The money was a most blissful and entirely unexpected windfall to a tyro with no knowledge of the Pay Warrant. Among the few boons we enjoyed in those days was the special grant of "field allowance," eighteenpence a day for six months, issued in advance, making the (to me) colossal sum of £13 6s. 6d. handed over by the paymaster, and intended to cover the cost of war-kit. My outfit was new and com-

plete, and I fear very little of the money went that way. I spent one day in Dublin and two in London, the first at Macken's, the second at the old Hummums Hotel, and I am free to confess that, save and except 30s. paid for a sparsely fitted tin canteen, the bulk of my windfall went in riotous living. My last act, I remember, on leaving the little station at Greenhithe, was to throw my tall hat into the nearest green field.

There were six of us, all except myself gone over to the majority. Stuart, the senior, had married a wife on the very eve of embarkation, and I remember he brought her alongside in a shore-boat, where they made their sad farewells before us; Stephen Moore, afterwards of Barne, Tipperary, and Member for that County; little Archer, who had come in from the Militia, and who always wore in plain clothes the light blue cloth regulation trousers that had been invented for infantry by the Prince Consort; Pye, of the old Staffordshire family that produced a Poet Laureate; Ramsbottom, afterwards Isherwood, and brewer of the famous Brenchley ales; and myself, the junior and quite the youngest of the party. One or two other passengers made up the party, officers like ourselves bound for the front, notably two lieutenants of the Royal Navy, one of whom rose later to be Admiral Sir George Tryon, and to find his fate in the sinking of H.M.S. *Victoria*.

These naval officers seemed likely to play a prominent part in the voyage, for it soon came to be seriously considered whether we should not break the charter-party and dispossess the captain of his command. He was a very incompetent person, and we were continually in danger of shipwreck. The machinery was out of gear, and the first night in the Channel the bearings became so hot that an explosion seemed imminent. We narrowly ran ashore off Ushant; when we were in the traffic way we were constantly in danger of collision, which, indeed, our Captain courted by such close steering that it was a mercy we did not run down everything we met. Once, indeed, in the Bosphorus, when sitting in the cabin below, I was thrown out of my chair by a violent concussion, and rush-



ing up on deck I found that our madcap commander had fallen foul of another vessel, but was capering about the deck with delight, shouting, "Shaved him by an inch." He was drunk, of course; he was always drunk, and so was his chief officer, hence the intended interference with the command and navigation of the steamer. Nothing came of it, however, and we won unharmed through all the dangers and difficulties of the voyage. They were numerous enough, for ours was a trading voyage; we carried cargo principally, passengers were a secondary thought, and we landed at many ports of call out of the regular run to take in and discharge merchandise. First a long halt at Gibraltar; then we steered a northern course to Cagliari in Sardinia, thence south to Malta, and so eastward through the Grecian Archipelago to the Island of Syra, already a busy, thriving place, and at last reached Constantinople, where we stayed so long that we began to think that we should never leave it again.

All this time we were eating our hearts out to get to Sebastopol, and be in, at least, at the death. The siege, from all accounts, was drawing to a close; the final assault could not be long delayed; yet here we lingered among the shipping at the base, idling away our time, wasting our opportunities while the Captain peddled and bargained with the cosmopolitan scoundrels in this modern tower of Babel. We had no duties to perform, we were under no restraint, but free to wander at large, surprised and surfeited with the strange sights of this ancient Eastern city. The Golden Horn is to me an abiding memory; I can never forget how the superb beauty of its natural surroundings, the vivid picturesqueness of the streets, the bridges, the bazaars, the people, affected me. We roamed to and fro from morning till night, exploring the city and the suburbs and the country round; we took boat (the historic *caïque*) across to Scutari, and hunted, or were hunted by, the wild dogs that infested and terrorised the whole neighbourhood; we loafed about Pera, so French in aspect and in such strange contrast to the purely Oriental Stamboul; we made excursions into the Valley of Sweet

Waters, and one day Moore and I got as far as Buyukderi by boat on a visit to Sir John Michel, at that time commanding the Turkish contingent. I had an introduction to him from my father, for they were old brother officers in the Saucy Sixth, long commanded by Michel, who, by his showy, light-hearted ways, had earned for himself the sobriquet of "Flash Jack."

We were received with extreme kindness by the General, who attached us to his staff, and we rode after him to a great review. It was a memorable occasion to me, for I had never seen so many men on parade—quite 20,000—and still more because I had never ridden so far, and with such little skill. I can remember asking one of the A.D.C.'s (it was Whitmore, who died the other day, Sir George Whitmore, an officer greatly distinguished in New Zealand warfare) how I should hold my reins. Another experience was the return voyage to Constantinople about midnight alone with the Turkish boatman, whose forbidding aspect inspired such little confidence that Moore and I agreed to keep watch and watch through the night. It was never quite settled which of us broke the *consigne*, but it is a fact that when we were brought to we were both sound asleep.

At last we started for the Crimea, and after a rough crossing of the tempestuous Black Sea, entered Balaklava Harbour on an early day in July. Ample means, systematically employed had by this time reduced the chaos of the dread winter last past into something like order. The narrow port was still overcrowded with shipping, but there were wharves at which the smaller could lie and discharge their cargoes, and there were store-houses for the heterogeneous masses of goods, the endless variety of *munitions de guerre et de bouche*; the different departments had their distinctive offices easily recognised, so had the various regimental depôts. We found that of the 63rd readily enough, and after a few words with the quartermaster in charge, we set off full of high spirits under his direction to walk across the Fedoukhine Heights, and find our way on foot to our camp before Sebastopol.

It was a rare morning, bright sun and exhilarating air, and a perfectly clear atmosphere, in which the whole expanse of the now historic plateau, reaching from the sea to the Tchernaya, lay unrolled like a map at our feet. A grand panorama on which was displayed, and easily distinguished: every item and detail of the great game in progress below, besieged and besiegers, the beleaguered fortress and its miles-long lines of defensive works, the innumerable tents and huts of the assailants, the web-like ramifications of the trenches and saps—all were plainly visible. Taking the attacks from right to left, here was the Malakoff, next it the Redan, then came the deep dip into the Woranzoff Road, then our left attack, ending at the cemeteries, where the French took up and occupied the extreme left resting on the sea. For all it was a quiet morning, the batteries were not idle; gun answered gun; their reports, long heralded by a small white cloud like a handful of cotton-wool, the time-honoured puff that will never more be seen in these days of smokeless powder. As we walked on we came upon more tangible and more striking evidences of the business in hand. Now it was an orderly encampment of some smart regiment, now the ragged lines of a native transport corps, now the bugles of a French brass band, now marching parties returning after a night spent in the trenches, now a staff officer galloping *ventre à terre*, now a handful of reckless subalterns on pleasure bent, taking a day off to picnic in the Baider Valley, or try their luck at the new French restaurant at Kamiesch. It was indeed a novel and inspiring walk, to me especially, but a few months before but barely released from the monotony of humdrum school-life.

The regiment, when I joined headquarters a month or two later, could not be called in good order, nor did it fully recover from the effects of that dread winter of '54 till years afterwards. It suffered more than any other in the Crimea; not merely from the enemy's fire, but from an extraordinary oversight of the Colonel's, who had devised a plan of his own for protecting it from the inclement weather. His idea was to dig a series of deep pits, at the

bottom of which tents were to be pitched. No provision for drainage was made, and at the first heavy rain the pits filled with water and were quite uninhabitable. Yet the Colonel was so intent upon his scheme that he would not permit the men to have access to their knapsacks and much needed change of underclothing until they had completed their pits. The result was that early in January the regiment was sent down to Balaclava to recuperate, and on the morning it marched out it mustered, all told, just thirty souls. In the September previous it had embarked at Dublin a thousand strong.

We were warmly welcomed by the regiment; the duties were hard, and the arrival of six subalterns was a great help to the roster. Some of us appeared "in orders" at once for trench duty that very night, and, novice-like, rejoiced greatly, although going down into "the ditches," as they were called, had ceased to be an agreeable pastime to most of the old stagers. It never palled on me, however—it was too strange, too novel, too exciting to a boy of my tender years and strictly limited experiences. I was, in truth, quite a child; they called me "the Light Company baby," and I more than once overheard the pitying comments of French soldiers as they talked of *ce petit enfant*, and commiserated his *pauvre mère*; but it was delightful, a source of endless and absorbing joy, to be doing the work of a full-grown man, as I thought, to give orders and be obeyed, not without condescension, by the war-worn veterans I was supposed to command. The sense that I was running danger, too, real danger, was very thrilling, and I continually sought to gratify it. It was a favourite amusement with us youngsters to do daring things, to disdain cover, to go out beyond the shelter of the trenches and attract the enemy's fire—feats obviously reprehensible, for which, when caught, we were sternly reproved. The whistle of a passing grape-shot, the sing-song of the approaching shell, the thud of a rifle-bullet, gave us acute emotions, but I can call to mind that when first exposed to a really serious and damaging fire, I did not like it a bit. It was on the occasion of laying a battery platform at the



open end of a new entrenchment, in full view of the Crow's Nest battery, from which the Rooskies, having got our range exactly, did considerable execution. I escaped myself with a riddled jacket; but there were several real casualties, and I was glad enough when the order came to withdraw my party.

A turn of duty in the trenches might be very full of variety. Sometimes the night passed without incidents more exciting than visiting of the sentries in the open, amidst the vineyards, now in full bearing, and the bringing back of many bunches of delicious grapes, or in fatigue duties, assisting the Royal Engineers, a duty which originated the then hackneyed phrase, "Right face, follow the sapper." The sappers were detested, not merely as task-masters, but because it sometimes happened they did not bring back all the men they took away, and experiences like that I have just told were not uncommon. The fatigue duties were not always easily performed, and I can remember my despair at being sent down to the first parallel to bring up a "Gibraltar Gyn," an instrument with which neither I nor my men had the slightest acquaintance. Now and again the enemy woke us up pretty effectually; there was a sortie every two or three nights, when the sentries came tumbling back and some sharp fighting ensued, but never, in my experience, with any decisive results. Sometimes, taken by surprise, we were driven out of a trench, but we never failed to return and recover it at the point of the bayonet. I remember a stampede of the picket in the Woronzoff Road, held by a small party in advance of our trench, and the painful consequences to one of those who had given way. As they were streaming into our trench, followed closely by the "Rooskies," and we plied our rifles at close quarters, a man of ours had the misfortune to kill one of our own side. This unintentional murderer served on for many years afterwards, and was always known in the regiment as "Gaffney, who shot the —th man." Gaffney came, I think, to count the sobriquet a title of honour; but, so far as I can remember, he had no great claims to be thought a good soldier.

Sortie or no sortie, midnight always brought us a keg of rum, and the accustomed issue of a tot of grog, which I confess I was slow to appreciate, despite the pressing recommendation of my elders. I preferred to wait for the daylight brew of coffee, or the appearance of my servant bringing down breakfast from camp. Our memories are so largely affected by the first flavours of food that I have always associated a Lyons or Bologna sausage with breakfast in the trenches, where it was almost invariably a principal feature of the meal. How many of our recollections are thus mixed up with food ! The pungent flavour of Worcester sauce recalls my *début* as a soldier, and my first lunch at mess ; there, too, I tasted claret for the first time, and overcame my repugnance to olives. I first learnt what French mustard was like in a French restaurant at Pera, and I remember where I made the discovery that hard tack, the most ancient of ship's biscuits, may be made palatable by frying it with salt pork.

The strange chances that wait upon us in life, the luck that comes to one, the misfortune and sad fate of another, were strikingly illustrated even in those early days. Two subalterns shared the same tent : one was promoted captain and was privileged to occupy a tent alone. The very morning that he moved his quarters a round shot from the long range guns the Russians used towards the end of the siege burst through the tent and lodged where his camp bed had been fixed but an hour or two before. Adrian Fraser, the captain of my company, promoted to the rank after one year's service at the age of nineteen, accidentally shot himself by my side by the bivouac fire on the expedition to Kinburn, and was dead within a month. We had been cleaning our revolvers at daylight as we lay on the straw, and, eager to show the superiority of his weapon, he pulled the self-acting trigger too far, and lodged a bullet in his knee-cap. Some of the doctors were for instant amputation ; others who hoped to save the leg prevailed ; but Fraser, after lingering in much suffering, presently died on board the hospital ship.

My share in the final scenes of the great siege was

small enough. I was no more than a "super," but I doubled the part with that of spectator, and in the most exciting episodes I had the good fortune to be on the spot in a forward place to see the performance. I had gone down to the trenches on the night of the 7th, the night preceding the attack upon the Malakoff and Redan, and our party occupied the advanced trench at the cemetery, just where the Careening Harbour ends, the point at which Sir William Eyre on the 7th June forced an entrance, and might, if properly supported, have captured the place. The night was noisy, and we came in for much pounding, with no very evil results.

Towards daylight we were withdrawn to the second parallel and posted not far from its right extremity, just above the Woronzoff Road. By this time the word had gone round that this was the fateful morning. Indeed, we could judge for ourselves that great events impended, for the trenches of the right attack were crammed with troops.

Far away on our right the French faced the Malakoff, but their columns were beyond our vision, and we only knew from the sudden outburst of tremendous firing that the game was begun. Then at last we followed suit, and at a disadvantage, as is told in history, for our people had to encounter not only the garrison of the Redan, but the reinforcements of fugitive Russians crowding into it when driven out of the Malakoff by the French. Even to my young and inexperienced eyes it seemed that our attack was never "meant"; it was such a small handful, so widely dispersed over an extensive front (wisely, no doubt, to minimise the effect of the murderous fire), and it was so little supported. But as we strained our eyes intently, we could see the few who reached the bluff earth-work climb over, leaving us in breathless uncertainty of what was happening inside. The issue was not long in doubt. Our men had made a bold bid for possession, but were too weak to maintain their hold. One by one the little red figures dropped back slowly, reluctantly, but still always in retreat.

General Sir James Simpson, who was in chief command.

in his despatch reporting the failure, wrote that, as he was situated, he was unable to organise a fresh attack. There can be very little doubt that he was not quite equal to the occasion. The one objection—the only possible—would have been the scarcity of troops, and this certainly was not the case; as I have said, the trenches swarmed with them. The burden of the attack had fallen on the Second and Light Division, but the First was in hand and the Highland division, both aligned in the rear parallel, and the Third and Fourth divisions occupied the inner slopes of the Woronzoff Road. It is ancient history now to discuss the quality of Sir James Simpson and his fitness to succeed to the Army on the death of Lord Raglan, but I may mention here that a year or two later, when I was on the staff of Sir William Eyre in Canada, he threw some light on this point by describing to me the Council of War which he, with the other divisional generals, attended on the eve of this attack. It was essentially a debating society; everyone spoke and stuck to his own views, accepting no guidance from, and indeed ignoring, the authority of the general in chief. In the end the Council broke up with a few parting words from the helpless and bewildered Sir James: "Well, gentlemen, I can tell you nothing more; you must all do the best you can."

Very general depression prevailed in the trenches that afternoon, and a rank crop of "shaves" grew up and were rapidly circulated. The Russians intended to make a counter attack; we might expect a general sortie all along the line, and this was encouraged by the undoubted fact that the enemy kept up a tremendous fire from all his batteries; there would be a combined movement from the Tchernaya, where Liprandi still held some 20,000 men, threatening our flank and communications. The day wore on without justifying these gloomy rumours, and as night fell we returned for a second time to our own quarters in the cemetery, thus performing forty hours' continuous duty in the trenches. There was no slackening of the fire from the fortress at first, and one or two of our advanced sentries were wounded, but just before daylight it ceased absolutely



and completely, the cessation being preluded by a tremendous explosion which, as I lay on my back within the trench, I thought must be an earthquake at least. It was in effect the demolition of the first of the forts, blown up, one after the other, by the Russians on abandoning the place. They were in full retreat, and we could see them going, for, in the growing light and in the absence of all fire, we climbed up on to the top of the trench and gazed freely around. It was something to remember all one's life. The bridge of boats across the harbour recently constructed for this very purpose was thronged with dense, dark masses of troops, which were continually ravaged and rent by our shot and shell, for our guns above had been turned on to them with fatal accuracy so soon as the evacuation was realised. It was an impressive sight—horribly impressive and greatly heightened by the dramatic disappearance of the forts as they went up into the sky in succession amidst clouds of smoke and flame, for all the world like a grand pyrotechnic display, then crumbled away, great masses of ruined *débris* sinking straight into the sea.

But for the stringent orders immediately issued there would, I think, have been a general stampede of our men into the town. As it was, one or two managed to slip away, hungering for loot, and they were soon joined by bands of marauders drawn from the camps in the rear by the glorious news that Sebastopol was ours. There was little enough to attract or repay them; the plunder was limited to shattered mirrors, scraps of broken furniture, books once smartly bound, now torn and stained, a few bits of china and other ornaments, cracked and otherwise injured, with all kinds of Russian arms—swords, rifles, bayonets, and the like—and refuse of the battlefield. "Jack" was, of course, to the fore; he made a clean sweep of all that came to his hands, and I remember the amusing aspect of one sailor as he toiled back under the burden of a mantlet, one of those gigantic mats of close woven rope that were used in those days to screen the opening of an embrasure. The French *piou-piou* was a diligent and

omnivorous marauder. He preferred to pass through our lines where he was less interfered with than in his own, and I have still one or two unconsidered trifles which I bought from French soldiers on their way back from the town.

The end of the siege brought relief from trench duty, but we had plenty of work to do in other ways. It pleased the Colonel scornfully to condemn the methods of instruction that obtained at the depôt, and to send all of us new arrivals back to drill to begin at the very beginning with the traditional goose step, and to pass through every preliminary detail. He was right enough, and I am grateful to the fastidious nicety of my superior, for I became very thoroughly acquainted with the minor business of soldiering, as it was then understood. Our Adjutant, who held us in the hollow of his hand, had been promoted from Sergeant-Major after Inkerman, and, according to his lights, was an excellent instructor. Poor M——! He has long since gone over to the majority and he died by his own hand, in a fit of frenzy superinduced by excess. He was a rough, hard-bitten, illiterate soldier, weak in character, but well meaning, scarcely qualified to rise to the position and dignity of a commissioned officer. He had been a butcher's boy before enlistment, and showed his origin unmistakably, especially when mounted on parade. When he rode out to give a point or mark for a deployment it was quite plain from his seat that he still thought he carried a basket of meat on his knee, as when jogging on his rounds through the village. On one occasion, when a strange cow wandered into our bivouac at Kinburn, and was promptly shot to supply us with much needed rations, the pioneers under the quartermaster clumsily essayed to dress the carcase. M——, from the height of his dignity as lieutenant and adjutant, looked on contemptuously, but forebore to interfere. At last, goaded beyond endurance at the sight of the mangled meat, he cried, "Hi, ye fules, give me the knife." His command of pure English was somewhat limited, and, on another occasion, when the Queen had sent to every regi-



## CHAPTER III.

## AFTER THE FALL OF SEBASTOPOL.

The Unexplained Expedition to Kinburn—"Vinegar Jones" and "Gallows Jones"—Life on Board the *Princess Royal*—At Kinburn—A Welcome Visit from (Sir George) Tryon—Back in the Crimea—Military Training—Sir William Eyre: A Sketch—Two Salutary Warnings—An Armistice—Exploring the Crimea—Chance-Meeting with a Cousin—A Robbery—The Crimean Army Broken Up.

ACTIVE operations almost entirely ceased with the fall of Sebastopol, and the armies on both sides prepared to go into winter quarters. Peace was already in the air, and diplomacy was at work, but these were high secrets that did not reach us subalterns at the front. Rumour was ever rife of a field campaign, some great impending movement against the Mackenzie Heights above the Tchernaya, where the Russian Army held its principal strength. Nothing came of these reports, as everyone knows, but an expedition was organised and despatched to Kinburn, for what reason no one knew at the time, nor has its object ever been clearly explained. It was, of course, a joint operation of the English and French, the two fleets under their respective Admirals, the British brigade commanded by General the Hon. Almeric Spencer, the French under General Bazaine, afterwards the famous Marshal who was with Maximilian in Mexico, and surrendered Metz to the Prussians. My regiment, the 63rd, was in Spencer's brigade, and we embarked with it, our ship being H.M.S. *Princess Royal*, Captain Jones, R.N., better known as "Vinegar Jones," and there was another Jones, a lieutenant, on board, who rejoiced in the sobriquet of "Gallows Jones." Old naval men will remember both these officers, the first as a very tight hand, the second as the hero of many quaint stories.

One comes back to me that may be worth the telling. "Gallows Jones" was appointed to the command of a gun-boat some years afterwards, commissioned for the China Seas, and when the small craft started on her long and lonely voyage Commander Jones assembled the ship's company and informed them that they carried no medical officer. "I shall have to doctor you, and I don't know much about it, but the Admiralty have sent on board a medicine-chest, in which there must be something good for every kind of complaint." Then he had it brought up and ordered every bottle to be emptied into one great tub. "Now, my lads," he said, "all the stuff is there, and there's bound to be something in it that will suit your complaints, and if any man goes sick he shall have a dose of the mixture." The only sequel of the story I know was that it was a remarkably healthy voyage.

Life on board the *Princess Royal* was my first experience of naval discipline, and of a voyage without the administrations of the steward, and an absolute contempt for sea-sickness, perhaps its best remedy. There was little enough comfort for us subalterns—a few feet of planking on the orlop deck, with one's camp-mattress and one small sea-bag. All the officers but the Colonel and two majors lived there in common, but the captains were provided with cots while we slept on the deck. The games that went on in that cockpit would no doubt be stigmatised nowadays as "ragging," and we had many favourite devices for annoying our neighbours and disturbing their night's rest. On one famous occasion the Marine sentry interfered, and one wag amongst us, Gilbert Lacy, elicited much laughter by shouting to us, "Don't make so much noise, boys; the sentry wants to go to sleep." There were others who were not allowed to go to sleep; in particular, one of the captains, Magnay by name, who was always a butt for us irreverent subalterns, and never a night passed but we let his cot down with a run when he was in his first slumbers. At last, goaded to desperation, he jumped up from the tangle of his blankets and rushed to the place under the gangway where the big drum of the ship's band



was always hung, and crying, "If you won't let me sleep, no one else shall," he proceeded to hammer it violently. Big drums are not often played in the night watches on board battle-ships, and we all got into fine trouble.

The combined fleets lay for a day or two off Odessa, and it was generally expected that we meant to bombard the town, a defenceless seaside city, strongly reminding me of Brighton. We could see through our glasses the wildest excitement on shore, a general exodus of the inhabitants inland by all manner of conveyances. But they were spared the evils, and we the disgrace, of destroying an unarmed and helpless city. Kinburn, our real goal, was, however, a fortress mounting many guns, and when we swooped down upon it in overwhelming strength it made some show of replying to our murderous and all-encompassing fire, but its flag was soon hauled down, and the empty and unprofitable conquest was ours. The land forces had been disembarked before the bombardment in flat-bottomed boats, discharged from steamers of little draught, to which we had been transferred from the great men-of-war. Our second transport was H.M.S. *Vulcan*, into which we were packed—some 600 souls—like herrings in a barrel. My liveliest recollection is that of passing the night in a small cabin with five or six others who had gathered there to smoke, in defiance of the regulations and of my feeble protests. I was told that I must get accustomed to tobacco, but it must have been that first unpleasant experience that made it distasteful to me till quite late in life.

We landed in field-service order, fully equipped to fight, armed with sword and revolver, and presumably self-supporting, carrying great-coats and three days' rations. Marching through the heavy sands thus weighted was irksome enough to a boy of sixteen, but the worst of it was that it made me ravenously hungry, and I devoured my three days' supply of food before nightfall. Some of us might have starved but for the welcome rations provided by the old cow we shot in camp; and I myself shall be ever grateful to Tryon (the ill-fated Sir George), who paid me a

friendly visit at the bivouac, and brought with him the remains of a joint of mutton from the wardroom table from H.M.S. *Royal Albert*.

On our return to the Crimea we settled down in winter quarters to a more or less monotonous and uneventful life. Although peace was in the air it seemed a long way off, and concerned us little. Our daily life was taken up by regimental routine, with the usual amusements that commend themselves to young officers with much time on their hands. The only real soldiering to be done was a turn of night picket in Sebastopol, among the ruins of the siege-worn town, where the picket house was a cellar on the water's edge of the harbour, and within earshot of the Russian sentries from the northern shore. The enemy still held this northern shore in force, although it was in no danger of attack. Now and again during the night, just to show they were alive, a round shot was fired over our heads, injuring no one. It was a dreary vigil, broken only by the visits of sentries, and snatches of sleep by the blazing wood fire, constantly fed with the *débris* from the town.

Systematic efforts were made to get the army into good order. Drills of all kinds were incessant, regimental brigade, and divisional. Very close and searching inspections were continually made by the generals commanding, and, according to the spirit of the times, great pains were taken with externals. Burnished buttons and well pipeclayed belts became again the rule, regular marching, and the exact execution of elaborate manœuvres were practised continually. We learnt little beyond the rudiments of routine work until a new Colonel came, a fine old veteran of the Peninsular days, one of the famous 43rd, who had fought through the Pyrennes with the Light Division under Wellington, and was strongly imbued with all the old traditions of practical warfare. His first appearance on parade rather moved us to laughter, for he was dressed in the latest military fashion, and wore a tall shako, the only specimen of the head dress to be seen in the Crimea. But he appealed to us all as a living survivor of the glorious past,

and I for one owe him a great debt of gratitude for turning my thoughts towards self-improvement and study. The latter was no easy matter, for there were few books about. There were no schools or courses of instruction, and except for a kindly word of advice from the chief, I had to learn what I could by myself.

It was not easy to acquire knowledge in those days, and in that distant field. Compared with the abundant military literature of to-day, the dearth of books was deplorable; there was little or nothing available but the Queen's regulations and field exercises, and, indeed, an intimate acquaintance with these was reckoned to constitute a first-class officer. I was better off than most of my soldier comrades through the forethought of my soldier father, who had included in my kit one or two of the few authorities extant, such as Sinnott's "Military Catechism," FitzClarence on "Outpost Duty," and a translation of De Brack on the "Three Arms." I picked up a good deal from the "Artillerist's Manual and British Officer's Compendium," to give its full title; the author was a cousin of my father's, with whom I spent a week or two when preparing for my examination already described. I made some progress with French also. There were Frenchmen all round us, although we were never very intimate with the French officers. Later in the winter French soldiers were constant visitors in our camp, and came carrying an empty bag which they took away filled with broken biscuit, hospitably given them by our men, who, thanks to the liberal pay allowed them, would eat nothing but fresh bread bought from the Maltese itinerant baker. There was great scarcity in the French camp at that time, although I do not remember to have seen it mentioned in any contemporary memoirs.

I had the good luck in these early days to get some insight into tactics on a considerable scale. Among the divisional generals was Sir William Eyre, a very old friend of my father's, who took a kindly interest in me and regularly invited me to act as galloper on his field days. We wearied at them with cut and dried



movements; the general had a fancy for covering a good deal of ground, for accustoming his troops to the varied features of the country, and working over broken ground. His long marches, and his skilful handling of his division—some 10,000 troops—was the subject of much comment in the camp, and provided an example that might have been more followed. All who took part in these manœuvres, my humble self included, must have benefited by them; they certainly enlarged my ideas and gave me thus early in life an experience unusual with youngsters. My good old Colonel, delighted that I should have this advantage, never refused me leave to attend, and even went the length of mounting me on his own charger, so that I should do proper credit to Sir William's staff.

It was a privilege to have been brought into such close relations with so distinguished a soldier as Eyre. Justice has never been done to him, and his name has passed into the oblivion that enshrouds so many insufficiently appreciated military worthies. He made his name first in the Kaffir wars, and was especially remarkable for his untiring energy in beating up the quarters of the enemy. He practically worked his regiment, the 73rd, now the 2nd battalion of the famous Black Watch, to death, and he himself laid the seeds of the heart affection that ultimately proved fatal to him. His forwardness in action is proved by the fact that with his division he alone succeeded, in the ill-fated attack on the 18th June, in getting into Sebastopol on the side of the cemetery, which he actually held until the order to retire. He was a man of original ideas, and I have heard him say that he strongly advocated, at the worst time of the dread winter, a scheme by which one half of the army should be sent down *en masse* to bring up supplies, while the other half held the trenches. His quality was so highly thought of that he was actually appointed Commander-in-Chief in the Crimea, in succession to Sir James Simpson. Lady Eyre assured me long afterwards that the appointment had been despatched by Queen's messenger, and that he was stopped *en route* and overtaken by a fresh order nominating Sir William Codrington.

It was ever Eyre's ambition to become a master of war, and, like all great soldiers, he was a deep student of the science, while he had many of the gifts for command. He inspired confidence in his surroundings, not unmixed with terror, for he was of imperious temper, commanding stature, and had a very masterful manner. He had a fierce face, with stern eyes glowering behind spectacles, but there was never a man more generous minded, or more anxious to make the *amende* if he had spoken too hotly. I had the good fortune to serve him as aide-de-camp in Montreal after the war, and I shall not easily forget one occasion on which he had given audience to a newly joined civil subordinate, whom he said it was necessary to put in his place. The poor creature came out of the inner office with a white face, seized his cap, and all but ran down the street. I was hastily commanded by the general to run after him and ask him to dinner. The fugitive indignantly refused, declaring nothing would induce him to sit at table with such a man.

It naturally fell to me to experience sometimes the weight of his hand. The household was once on the point of moving to the summer residence on the lower waters of the St. Lawrence, and, amongst other duties, I had been charged to see that a certain brand of wine was sent on to the country house. The general abruptly asked me one day whether I had carried out his orders. I answered in the negative, and was proceeding to explain when he interrupted me with a very fierce reprimand, which I was obliged to bear in silence. But at length he cooled down sufficiently to ask me why I had offended. "Because, sir," I answered, quietly, "there was none of the wine left."

There were two tender influences to which the fierce soldier was peculiarly amenable. One was that of his young and only son, the other was music, for he was an enthusiastic violoncellist, and played uncommonly well. Every morning he withdrew to his private study to practise, and hated to be disturbed. If by any chance any special business arose, or an important person called seeking an

interview, the A.D.C. in waiting approached him nervously, and hardly dared interrupt him. Sometimes his child was with him, and then it was safe enough, but we all preferred to give him a wide berth when the fiddle bow was at work. His boy grew up to be a gallant young soldier, strongly imbued with the military spirit. "He was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." Arthur Eyre obtained a commission in the 90th L.I., and was so well thought of that he was selected for special service in Ashanti, where he was employed as adjutant to Wood's native regiment. In the Amoafu attack there was some difficulty in getting the men to advance, and young Eyre exposed himself fearlessly, meeting his death in the field. There was a short pause in the advance while they buried him, and Sir Evelyn Wood has told me that one of the saddest ceremonies he ever performed was to read the burial service over this gallant soldier, whose promising career was thus prematurely closed.

I make no pretence of being especially virtuous, but I have to thank that Crimean campaign for two lessons that were borne in upon me, two pregnant warnings against the temptations of drink and play. I was brought into close contact with the first by the shock of seeing a brother officer suddenly succumb to delirium tremens. We had a dissolute major, who shall be nameless, who was strongly suspected of addiction to the bottle. One fine winter's morning, as some of us stood in the open enjoying the frosty air, this poor creature ran out from his tent, half dressed, hatless, dishevelled, and with wild gestures and a shriek of despair, rushed across to where a great snow-drift had been swept into a corner and buried himself completely in its depths. The horrors were strong upon him.

The other warning came from the narrow escape of a younger comrade from ruin and disgrace. In the tedium of the long winter evenings gambling had become very prevalent, and there were nightly gatherings for play in many of the regimental camps. The game was loo unlimited, and much money was lost and won. I, myself, despite inexperience and tender years, had been incon-



siderately drawn in more than once, and had lost much more than I could afford, a poor lieutenant, with little more than his pay, but happily not more than I could meet, when I was suddenly brought up with a round turn, at the opening, as it were, of an abyss at my feet. Another subaltern of ours had played more recklessly, and found it impossible to meet his engagements. He misappropriated a portion of the company's money, for he was temporarily commanding a company, and was entrusted with considerable funds. The rest of the story is not mine to tell, but it is pleasant to record, even vaguely, how a good Samaritan in the shape of a senior officer interposed to save the offender's character and commission. The warning was salutary, and I am glad to say I never forgot it.

At length, in the spring of 1856, came the announcement of an armistice, as a preliminary to peace; it was hailed with universal satisfaction, not because we wished an end to the war, but because the suspension of hostilities opened up the interior country. The land beyond the Tchernaya had been a sealed book to us hitherto. Cossack videttes were constantly posted upon the far side of the stream, and had been known to drop down and carry off unwary sportsmen who had ventured too far in the marshes after snipe. Beyond stood the Mackenzie heights, that rugged and almost inaccessible position which we had expected some day to attack, an impassable barrier hitherto forbidding approach. Now the interdict was removed, and we might ride up the slopes unchallenged and unopposed.

A very general wish prevailed throughout the allied camp to penetrate into the heart of the Crimea. Any number of expeditions were planned, and any number of parties started. Among the first on the road was one in which I was included. It consisted of five, three of us in the same regiment, and two others from a regiment in our brigade with which we had always been fast friends. We were happy in the possession of a two-wheeled cart, which belonged to our quarter-master, and which we borrowed for the trip. This cart was the conveyance for the two soldier servants who accompanied us, and it was loaded

with supplies for the party. We had a week's leave and intended to make a long round; to Bakhtchiserai the first day, Simferopol the second, halt there a day, the fourth day to Aloupka, fifth to Woronzoff, on the sixth to Baidar, and on the seventh into camp. We had little hope of finding food fit to eat, of drink there would certainly be none. So the cart carried many tins of preserved meats and other edibles, all from Oppenheim's famous store near Cathcart's Hill, and two heavy cases, one containing four dozen champagne, the other four dozen of porter, or beer, I am not sure which. Two bell tents, with a sufficient supply of camp kettles and camping appliances, made up the list.

We started gaily, soon after daylight. A good macadamized road led from the camp to the main Woronzoff Road, now thoroughly repaired and serviceable. Near the Traktir Bridge we diverged, crossed the Tchernaya without let or hindrance, and found ourselves in what, one week before, was the enemy's country. But the Russians we met were friends, not foes. There had been a great deal of fraternisation from the commencement of the armistice, Russian officers had been welcome guests in our camp, where they had exhibited considerable powers of absorption, and were generally very friendly and convivial. Now, as we passed camp after camp, we were repeatedly pressed to descend and refresh, but resisted nobly, having no wish to linger on the way. I have no very lively recollections of the country through which we passed, except that in its general features it much resembled the corner of the Crimea we had occupied so long. The road was excellent, and we made such good progress that we breasted the last steep hill that brought us into view of Bakhtchiserai while it was still daylight. There was a wide stretch of grass a few hundred yards off this road—it was the high road to Simferopol—and this we chose for our camping ground. Within half an hour we had made all snug, the horses were tethered, cart unpacked, fire lighted, kettles simmering, and tents pitched. Everyone worked with a will, and a crowd of mild-mannered Tartar peasants, who had been

attracted by our strange advent, and had gazed open-mouthed at our proceedings, asked nothing better than to lend us a hand. They helped to lift out the cases, brought us wood and water, and finally watched us hungrily as we opened the "fizz" bottles and did ample justice to our evening meal.

After dinner we strolled down into the quaint old Tartar town to explore. There was enough daylight left to realise its curious oriental character, with its box-like shops and nondescript bazaar. Then we entered a café, or drinking shop, and regaled ourselves with pipes and various fluids, and after a long rest again issued forth to wander through the narrow tortuous streets. It was about this time that I declined to accompany my comrades further. The day had been tiring, and as it was getting late I said I would find my way back to our camp alone. I had a steep climb up a difficult path, and as the night was now very dark I lost myself completely, wandering once into an enclosure guarded by sentries, who challenged me in incomprehensible Russian, then came after me with the bayonet at the charge, the kind of language I did not fail to understand. But I got out of their clutches unhurt and eventually reached our camp. The encampment was very still and silent: but for the horses, whose forms I could just distinguish where they were tethered, it might have been altogether deserted. What had become of our servants? Their tent was closed, and when I went up to it and called I got no answer; they were evidently sound asleep, and I had no wish to disturb them, but prepared to follow their example as speedily as possible. Just at this moment I heard a horse's hoofs on the main road hard by. I mention this to show that the camp was in a comparatively public spot, and the fact will make what followed all the more incomprehensible. Almost immediately afterwards the horse and its rider came up to the encampment, and a voice in English inquired the way to Simferopol. I pointed out the road, and a short conversation followed. When told my regiment the traveller asked after a cousin in it—no other than myself. "I am the very man," I answered, adding, "you must be



Edward," knowing that a cousin had come out recently to the Crimea.

Strange brief meeting. "Like ships that pass in the night." We shook hands, and my cousin rode out into the darkness of the Simferopol road. From this he never emerged again. I have never seen him since, nor can I quite say that I saw him on that occasion.

I was now pretty well dead-beat, and most anxious to turn in, so I made up a bed in the most approved campaigning fashion, with a waterproof sheet beneath, and my saddle and wallets as a pillow. I did not quite like the idea of going off to sleep before my companions returned, but closed the tent and lighted a little lamp, meaning to set myself to read a little book I carried with me. Then I placed my revolver ready by my bedside—I cannot quite say why—and this is all I remember, for it is needless to say that before I had read a dozen lines of my book I was sound asleep.

I was aroused by a whiff of cold air blowing in through the now wide open door of my tent. I turned lazily, thinking the others had at last come back, but saw that I was still alone. But on looking round—the lantern was still alight—I became at once conscious of a great change in my surroundings. The whole aspect of the interior of the tent was changed—everything was in disorder, saddle-bags, wallets, etc., everything lay tossed about here and there as though some evil-disposed person had been "making hay" in the place, as the phrase goes. In great surprise I sprang to my feet and realised now what had occurred. The tent had been "looted," ransacked, rifled, robbed of everything worth taking. The two heavy cases of wine and porter, which had stood close by the tent pole, had been lifted out bodily, and were gone. The saddle-bags were empty, the wallets also, except for a few odds and ends, such as socks, brushes, soap, which seemingly had no attraction for the thieves. My companions' revolvers, which had been hung on the tent pole, had been stolen, and even the medals, Crimean and Turkish, which were on our servants' tunics had been cut off and abstracted.

The last was the strangest and cleverest coup, for these tunics, being nearly new, had been taken off on arrival by our careful men and left rolled up in our tent. Seeing them there, as I was preparing to lie down, I had thought they would add to my comfort, and I had used them as a pillow. In other words, they had been actually removed from under my head before the theft was accomplished.

This act alone bore testimony to the extreme adroitness of the thieves. But their proceedings were altogether admirable, from their point of view. The removal of the heavy cases must have taken some time, and it had been accomplished without disturbing me in the least. Indeed, I could conceive the grim amusement of the thieves as they saw me sleeping calmly throughout the operations. Possibly one watched me while the others worked, and had I moved I should probably have been speedily disposed of. My revolver, which lay under my hand, had been left where it was.

It is impossible to describe my feelings. Indignation and amazement predominated, not unmixed with a certain sense of shame, which was deepened by the reproaches of my friends, who soon afterwards arrived upon the scene. Their first consternation was succeeded by disgust, and I was made the scapegoat. It was all my fault, they declared. I had gone to sleep on sentry, most heinous military offence, and I deserved a court-martial at the least. I could only plead, in my defence, that I never accepted the duty of sitting up to watch, that there was no more reason why I should do so than they. It was quite an accident. I had been in the tent alone, our servants were just as much to blame, or more, for they had slept through the whole affair. However, the milk was spilt, recrimination and reproaches were rather late in the day—or, rather, night—and we thought it best to turn in and get what sleep we could, leaving all further action till the morning.

Daylight revealed the full extent of our losses, and in no way diminished our disgust. Everything had been stolen, food, drink, valuables—if the horses had been left it was only because their removal might have betrayed



the thieves. It was reluctantly admitted by all that to continue our expedition was out of the question, but before deciding finally to return we paid a visit to the head of the police at Bakhtchiserai to report the robbery and seek redress, vainly hoping that we might recover some of our property, and so be enabled to continue our journey. Our English uniforms commanded respect, we were civilly received, and after setting forth our grievances filled up a number of voluminous forms. They told us no pains would be spared, that the police would surely lay their hands on the thieves—in the course of the next few months! Would it be too much to ask us to call at the police office daily until something was discovered? We made an appointment for that day week, without the slightest intention of keeping it, and, returning to our tents, packed the *débris* of our possessions, saddled up, and about mid-day started for home. It was late when we reached our encampment on the heights, and we slunk in unobserved, a very dejected and disappointed lot, in wretched contrast to the gay party that had started forth about forty-eight hours before. Next day our misadventure was common talk, and the burden of the blame fell upon me. I still meet a veteran of those Crimean times who remembers the story and revives the old chaff about my sleeping when on sentry at Bakhtchiserai.

We never heard a word from the Russian police. No one could throw any light upon the robbery, or give us a clue to the identity of the thieves. No doubt they were near relations and friends of the mild-mannered and obliging Tartars who had assisted us in pitching our tents.

With the advent of peace, the great army collected in the Crimea for the prosecution of hostilities was broken up. It was only a great army relatively, but it was the largest ever got together at that date. In strength it was not a third of the army serving in South Africa at the close of the Boer War, but at no time even then had such large numbers assembled in one place. At the grand review, given in honour of the allied commanders and the Russian General-in-Chief, and attended by Marshal Pelissier, the

French Generalissimo, General della Marmora, the Sardinian commander, and General Todleben, the illustrious defender of Sebastopol, there were eighty guns upon the ground, two troops of Horse Artillery, five field batteries and the siege train, two regiments of the Land Transport, and forty-nine battalions.

## CHAPTER IV.

## IN NOVA SCOTIA.

At Halifax—The British Infantry in those Days—The Drink Curse—Insubordination—A Martinet: "Make Your Men Glide"—Types of Officers—A Russian Dog with an Animus against the Royal Engineers—Robert Home and his Habit of Exaggeration—Duncan, R.A.—Lord Haliburton and his Story of "Sam Slick"—Garrison Life—Impecunious Subalterns—Harmless Flirtations and Other Pastimes—Pairing for the Season—Amateur Theatricals—My Acquaintance with E. A. Sothorn—His *Début* at the Haymarket.

My regiment, the 63rd, was one of the first to embark. We were detailed with others, the 17th, the 39th, and 62nd, for garrison duty in Canada and Nova Scotia, and we left the Crimea on May 1st, 1856. We were lucky in moving thus early, for we had the first chance of disposing of our ponies, saddles, and camp belongings, unsaleable property, as it soon proved, destined to enrich many a native Tartar who had simply to put out his hand.

Nearly half a century has elapsed since the day I went on board the Cunard s.s. *Andes* in Balaclava Harbour, but I still remember the occasion. I could look back upon the year spent in Crimean service with a pleasurable sense of work accomplished, and service a little out of the common performed, at an age when I might still have been at school. I was a mere tyro in the profession of arms, but, at least, I had crossed the threshold and made the first step forward in the career I loved. I hope I did not swagger over much, but I thought myself a very fine fellow, and viewed with some condescension the notable sights and places I now visited for the second time on the voyage down. Constantinople found me quite *blasé*; I thought little of the marvellous Greek Islands, I quite looked down upon old friends at Malta, who had stagnated there while I was seeing "active service."

We thought ourselves immensely superior to the garrison at Malta. We were war-worn veterans, they were only Militia. Of course, as soldiers the advantage was all on their side. I was hardly competent to pass an opinion on the quality of the regiment, but for all my experience was so brief I knew enough of the business to recognise their smartness, their fine physique, their admirable demeanour and general efficiency. Old comrades, still surviving, who passed through Malta and Gibraltar in those days, will bear me out in describing these Militia regiments as the finest they have ever seen. The time spent in the Mediterranean was utilised to the full, and had more than sufficed to show what may be made of Militia regiments with leisure and zeal.

It may be interesting to refer briefly to the character and quality of the British Infantry at this particular period. I had an opportunity of observing at Halifax the three types of regiments that "lay together," as the soldier calls it, representing the various conditions that obtained at that time. There was one fine old seasoned corps (the 76th), composed entirely of old long-service soldiers, which had missed the Crimean War, and had spent many years in peaceful garrison life, being continually polished up and perfected the while, according to time-honoured traditions fast becoming obsolete. There was next a younger and a livelier regiment, the 62nd, which had done its share in the war, but, arriving late, had suffered but slightly from casualties and hardships, and was still in excellent order. Lastly, there was my own corps, the 63rd, which had passed through some serious vicissitudes, which had been practically abolished for some months following the severe treatment already described, and which had been imperfectly restored by the return of men from hospital, and the arrival of comparatively green drafts of men picked up with difficulty when recruiting was at the lowest ebb. Promotion had been so rapid that we had filled up with captains from other regiments; in the great wastage of the trying winter we had lost many of our best non-commissioned officers, and although there was a strong leaven of old soldiers, the



spirit amongst them was turbulent, the result of relaxation of discipline at the worst time.

As if to emphasise our shortcomings, we stood side by side with the 76th, made up entirely of splendid seasoned soldiers, well behaved in quarters, and steady at drill; a regiment of precisely the same kind as those which had started upon the Crimean Expedition, and which had melted away under the hardships of that mismanaged campaign. This regiment was officered, however, by grey-haired captains and lieutenants of sixteen years' service, and it was generally said of their Colonel, a decrepit old gentleman, who had been at Walcheren, that he drilled the regiment from a gig, and kept a cow with the forage allowed for his second charger.

Drinking was in those days the curse of the British Army, and no regiment was more tainted with it than ours. We were, unfortunately, quartered in a barrack without an enclosing wall; every door led straight into the street, and at every corner was an admiring citizen offering unlimited drinks to our thirsty Crimean heroes. There were mornings when the number of prisoners to be weighed off by the Colonel amounted to a couple of hundred; the crowd was so great, the witnesses were so many, that it was impossible to use the orderly room, so that the Colonel came out into the barrack yard, and facing the long line of culprits, at each end of which stood a single bayonet sentry, would tell them off in batches, all without distinction, to so many days' pack drill apiece. Confinement to barracks was never imposed, for it could not be enforced.

I might tell many stories, which would hardly be believed, of those days, of the terrible laxity of discipline, and of the insubordinate spirit of the men. Here is one. Despite its drunkenness, the regiment was especially good at drill, and particularly in one manoeuvre, the advance in deployed line. Our Colonel, who, as I have said, had served in the Peninsula, often practised this, and was fond, towards the end of the advance, of giving the word to charge. One day, when the parade had been too greatly prolonged to please the men, they charged at the word right across the

drill field under the Citadel, and, completely disregarding reiterated orders and bugle calls to halt, ran straight home to their barracks half a mile distant.

The General in command at Halifax at that time was Sir Gaspard Le Marchant, a martinet of the old school, and he gave us no peace. We bitterly resented his severity at the time, but on looking back I am satisfied that we owed him a debt of gratitude for bringing us into better shape. He made a point of attending the almost incessant drills that he prescribed, one of which was particularly trying, and would hardly be tolerated now. In those days it was deemed the acme of smartness for a soldier to throw up his rifle from "the order" to "the shoulder," without allowing the hand to go too far to the front. Our squads were placed within half a foot of a stone wall, against which they beat and cut their knuckles badly until they learnt by experience how the trick should be done. I have seen dozens and dozens of bleeding hands after half-an-hour's drill. Sir Gaspard was also very hot about the bearing of men as they marched. He had his own ideas on the subject, based on his own experience, and one day he came up to me as I was superintending the drill (I was acting adjutant at the time) and found very serious fault. "This won't do," he said, taking me by the arm, and pointing to one or two files who went slouching along; "that's not the way to walk, Mr. Griffiths. You should see the Spanish women walk. Have you ever been in Spain? No? Well, the women don't walk there—they glide. Make your men glide."

Sir Gaspard Le Marchant was a soldier of the old school, youngest son of the famous general who was the pioneer of military education, and who met his death in the glorious charge of the heavy cavalry at Salamanca. General Le Marchant was the parent and projector of Sandhurst, which grew out of the school first established at Great Marlow. His eldest son was killed in the fighting in the Pyrenees, in 1813; his second son, Denis, was the well-known chief clerk of the House of Commons; Gaspard was the third. After serving in Spain on the staff of Sir De

Lacy Evans, he was selected to command the 99th regiment when it was in particularly bad order, and brought it into the highest state of discipline and efficiency. No doubt he took up the task of reforming us *con amore*, yet he only succeeded at the cost of incurring the strong personal dislike of the whole regiment. He was undoubtedly a martinet, but he had a broad mind, a strong sense of duty, and was one of the best administrators who have ever served this country. His Governorship of Malta is still remembered as a record achievement, and he won golden opinions as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Madras.

I can recall some of the old-time types of officers, the survivals of the long peace, and of the great war that preceded it. One was a Waterloo veteran, now barrack-master, of a jovial disposition, who liked to dine at mess and pass the bottle. There was a colonel on the staff who had served with Sir Harry Smith in Kaffraria, and had been present at the much-discussed Battle of the Berea, on which he had a great deal to say, and for illustration he liked to pour a glass of claret on the table to show the dispositions made in crossing the river. We had a remarkable colonel of artillery in the garrison, noted, not for his scientific attainments, but for performing the unprecedented feat of being able to lie full length on the narrow mantelpiece of the ante-room. There was a dear old colonel of Engineers also, most courteous and kindly of souls, who greeted us warmly when we met: "Dear me, God bless my soul, I'm delighted to see you. Hope your father and mother are quite well. Dear me, God bless my soul, I entirely forget your name!"

This gallant old soldier, Colonel S——, was especially connected with our regiment. Our men, with that curious fondness for pets which characterises all soldiers, had brought with them a Russian dog from the Crimea, a half-wild wolf-like creature, who, for reasons best known to himself, had conceived an especial hatred of the Royal Engineers. It was, indeed, asserted that he knew the officers even in plain clothes. "Rooskie," as he was called, undoubtedly recognised the Engineer's uniform, and

all patterns of it. When any sapper appeared in the barracks, and more particularly Colonel S——, who was frankly afraid of the brute, Rooskie went for him savagely, and very naturally serious complaints were lodged against the dog. Again and again Rooskie's removal in some shape or form was decreed. He was repeatedly given over and conveyed at the bottom of a waggon (light gig) to some far-off backwood settlement, but he always found his way back to the barracks. He was sentenced to death, but no one could be found to hang him, and I fancy he survived to be run over one day in the street.

Rooskie was one of the worst specimens of the barrack dog, those strange creatures which deserve a special page in natural history. Ours at times became an almost intolerable pest. They are the most quarrelsome of their species, and when a fight began it was a signal for a general rush of all the dogs from all parts of the barracks, to witness, and perhaps take part in, the *mêlée*. There were times when the Colonel, goaded to madness, swore that not a dog should be suffered to live. Next morning, when the pioneers went round, rope in hand, to execute the dread fiat, not a dog was to be found. No doubt their owners hid them away, but many of us believed that the dogs knew all about it, and disappeared of their own accord. The barrack dog is as clever as any of his clever race. Strict rules exist in every regiment that no dogs are to be permitted to enter the mess premises, and no power on earth would prevail upon the barrack dog to cross the threshold of any mess house.

Looking back through the long vista of years, I fail to find many who have risen to marked distinction. Robert Home was an Engineer subaltern of great promise, in a measure fulfilled, but an early death cut short his career. He was an indefatigable student, of forceful character, imaginative in the highest degree, and a thorough master of his profession. He made a great name for himself in Lord Wolseley's Ashanti campaign, and it is probable that the advance on Coomassie would not have been easily accomplished without him, more particularly in his feat of



bridging the rapid Prah. Home's one failing was a tendency to exaggeration, of which many stories are told. He is supposed to have claimed that he not only bridged the river, but cut down the timber and placed the piers with his own hand. It became necessary once to hang one of the native camp followers, and Home, according to his own account, built the gallows, and, failing an executioner, performed the dread ceremony with his own hands. In later life, when head of the Intelligence Department, he did much valuable diplomatic work, and was greatly esteemed and trusted by Lord Beaconsfield, whom he accompanied to Berlin for the negotiation of the historic "Peace with Honour" treaty.

Another officer of the garrison in Halifax at that time was Duncan, of the Artillery, afterwards a prominent military M.P., and the historian of the Royal Regiment. He had the good luck to marry a fortune—one of the few prizes in the Halifax matrimonial market—and the possession of good private means no doubt helped him forward in the world. He was long associated with the Egyptian Army, and usefully employed in the formation of its artillery. A striking instance of his determined methods may be quoted. Being anxious to develop scientific training, he prepared a series of lectures for Egyptian artillery officers. He wrote them in English, for he knew no word of Arabic, and the officers were ignorant of any language except their own. In order to overcome this difficulty, Duncan had the lectures translated into Arabic in Roman characters, giving the nearest approach to the sound of the words, after which he learnt the lectures by heart and delivered them like a lesson.

Although not actually connected with the garrison, the present Lord Haliburton was at Nova Scotia with us for a time, and had crossed the Atlantic with us in the *Himalaya*. He was then a young officer in the Commissariat Department bound for Montreal, where I was destined to see much of him when I was serving there on Sir William Eyre's staff. Haliburton, as most people know, was the son of Judge Haliburton, the famous "Sam Slick," whose articles, signed with that pseudonym, ranked high in the numerous

literature of the early Victorian age. The sons, for there was a brother Robert, inherited much of the wit of their gifted father, and shone as conversationalists. Lord Haliburton's advancement was well deserved. Among other high qualities he had a genius for organisation, and when once taken into the War Office was retained there, rising continually to higher functions until he became a pillar of the Civil Administration. I think it was he himself who told me the story I venture to reproduce here, even though it may be a "chestnut." The Judge was once crossing the Atlantic, in a "liner," and, as usual, was the life and soul of the party on board. Someone resented this, but, unaware of his identity, came up to him and asked him if he knew Judge Haliburton. "Know him? Why, I shaved him for forty years." Next time, when the judge was at table with a number of people, the questioner took a friend aside and said, "I wonder you sit with that chap; he's only a barber."

Garrison life at outstations abroad has been described of late in terms not too complimentary to our French and German neighbours. I can confidently assert that fifty years ago at Halifax, a remote colonial capital, it presented none of the unsavoury conditions revealed by Lieutenant Bilse, of the German station, Forbach, and by a French marine officer of Toulon. We were not paragons of virtue, but neither were we sunk in vicious ways, and I believe, in many respects, compared favourably with the present generation of soldiers in peace time. Intemperance still lingered among a few survivals of the hard drinking days now slowly vanishing in the service and general society; there were "big" nights at mess, but they were never carried to excess; dignity and decency were not outraged, and there was no regular sitting over wine after dinner. The wine went round untouched, although it was cheap enough, owing to the Regent's allowance of £25 per company—the grant made at the desire of George IV., who wished that "every officer in the Army should drink his wine like a gentleman." But by-and-by the allowance was diverted to reduce the price of

daily messing (food), and not of wine. The one or two toppers amongst us preferred something stronger than wine, and drank spirits secretly, or in each other's rooms. I had a neighbour in quarters, an old major, who often crept home to his room in the small hours, and I perfectly well remember hearing him one night, as he groped along the passage, ejaculating fervently as his hand touched the door, "Thank God! Safe at last!"

Impecuniosity is rather a misfortune than a crime, and the question of ways and means—the difficulty of regulating the budget—was seriously felt by some of us. It was not that we were extravagantly inclined, or given to riotous living; we were actually pinched and pressed merely to make both ends meet. There were subs. like myself, who fought it out as bravely as we could, meeting unavoidable expenses that took every penny of our small incomes,\* compelled, yet willing enough, to pay heavy charges to maintain the honour of the regiment and make a good personal appearance. General guest nights, with champagne flowing, balls, dances, and regimental entertainments, imposed a severe tax, and tailors' bills for uniforms constantly renewed or changed might run on, but must eventually be paid. The provision of fur clothing as winter approached was a severe tax: the uniform overcoat, lined and faced with astrachan, the fur caps and gloves, and the warm woollen shoes, cost quite £20. Many a time have I scanned with anxious eyes my mess account, duly exhibited daily on the mess sideboard, carefully calculating whether I could afford a glass of beer for luncheon, or, indeed, any luncheon at all, for it was on the cards that I might have to be satisfied with the traditional "subaltern's luncheon"—"a glass of water and a pull at the waistbelt."

Amusements were cheap, and we had plenty of spare time to indulge in them. The burthen of duty lay lightly upon us; it did not go beyond mere routine work, and

\* My regimental pay was 6s. 6d. per diem, or £121 per annum, of which, after deduction for mess and band subscriptions, only a little less than £9 reached me, but I had in addition an allowance from my father of £36 per annum.

except when orderly officer or on guard, at most once a fortnight, we were free of all professional calls after mid-day. Commanding officer's parade, an hour's machine-like drill in the barrack squares, began the day at the comfortable hour of 10 a.m.; one's presence might then be required at the orderly room, where the Colonel punished the drunken rank and file, or reprimanded quieter offenders, or it might be our part to administer justice according to our lights as members of a court-martial. Professional instruction of any kind was altogether absent until much later, when the Majors held classes in the most elementary subjects, such as the weight equipment, the cost of messing, and the keeping of company accounts, of which they were generally more profoundly ignorant than their pupils. The higher tactics were a sealed book to us; we learnt nothing of outpost duty, reconnaissance, or of the principles of strategy, as shown in the conduct of past campaigns by the great masters of war.

Yet it may be urged that, if not an improving life professionally, it was for the most part healthy and cleanly, with little to be ashamed of from the moral side. We did not, as I have said, fall into the vicious, disreputable ways of foreign officers who, while they may spend more hours in actual soldiering, waste long hours in café-haunting and on their *menus plaisirs* for the want of something better to do. We had two especial safeguards, an abiding love of games and sport, and peculiar advantages for harmless flirtation in the easy social relations of the place. There was no polo fifty years ago, it had hardly got beyond its Persian birth-place, but officers cultivated cricket, football, and the rest as ardently as to-day. In the matter of sport, Halifax was a Paradise in its way. Shooting and fishing might be freely enjoyed by putting out your hand. The primeval forests were within a short day's ride, rivers and lakes well stocked with trout and salmon still free and unpreserved, and all the delights of camp life in true backwoods-man fashion. Those who had the means made longer expeditions in search of bigger game, and went out into the interior with Micmac Indian guides and all the parapher-



nalía to establish a hunter's camp, to live in the open, cook their own food, and sleep by the blazing logs in the snow. They were after the great elk, locally named "moose" and "cariboo," still plentiful in those days, which were supposed to provide excellent sport, although the fact was questioned. Some wags who had tried it declared that moose hunting was very poor fun, and compared it to sitting up all night with your feet in a bucket of iced water, and shooting a cow in the morning.

The magnificent landlocked harbour of Halifax was an unrivalled playground, summer and winter, for boating and yachting on its placid waters, for skating over longer stretches of ice than are to be found anywhere else in the world. The use of boats was a necessity, moreover, for there was the detachment on "the Island" (in the middle of the harbour) to be visited, and the musketry camp far off, beyond "Macnabs'" on the South-East Passage. Some of us—again it was a question of means—took to more ambitious seamanship, and navigated our own yachts as master mariners, after learning to take sights and work out a reckoning. Until the snow came (rinks had not yet been invented) the skating was indeed superb. There was a chain of lakes on the Dartmouth side, the first to be frozen; and later, if the winter was hard, the North-West Arm, in continuation of the main harbour, offered a great expanse of glare ice, five-and-twenty miles in length from the Chebuctoo heads and the sea. The snow, when it fell honestly and heavily, with no alternations of thaw and slush, brought its own joys; runners replaced wheels, the sleighs came out with their merry bells, and smooth motion and snow picnics became the rule. A long string of two-seated sleighs, a pleasant *tête-à-tête* drive for many miles snugly ensconced in the buffalo robes with your "muffin" by your side, a halt at some hospitable settler's, and an impromptu dance in his barn, with a return journey in the crisp moonlight air, left impressions that are still vivid.

The "muffin" was a social institution of those days, which may or may not have survived. Every young swain by unwritten but acknowledged law was permitted to make

his choice of a partner for the season, with whom he danced exclusively, and whom he drove in his sleigh and skated with hand in hand. The "Blue Noses," as the Nova Scotian maidens were styled, were uncommonly attractive, direct descendants of the daughters of Acadie, as winsome as Longfellow's Evangeline, as simple and unsophisticated and as well behaved. Mrs. Grundy did not exist, or held her tongue, and the young people enjoyed the game without stint or question. One very marked result followed these free and easy relations. The course of true love ran smooth for once, and many marriages were made. In one regiment five officers succumbed in as many months to the tender charms of the constant companion. In my regiment there were more case-hardened bachelors, although we did not entirely escape. The story was told against me that being then under eighteen I was overheard proposing matrimony in a quiet corner to a charmer considerably my senior. No stern parent came next day to ask me my intentions, but I was chaffed unmercifully at the mess.

Another favourite amusement was that of acting in amateur theatricals, begun in the first instance to befriend a popular manager who had spent a season at Halifax with very poor results. We resolved to get up a joint performance for his benefit, and in this way I first became acquainted with E. A. Sothern, who afterwards won such a great reputation in London. He had been running a theatre styled "Stewart's Lyceum," which was nothing more than a glorified barn. Stewart—Douglas Stewart he called himself—or Sothern, was very popular in the garrison; all of us, young and old, soldiers of the garrison and sailors of the fleet, worshipped Mrs. Sothern, who was then in the zenith of her great beauty, and pined with no less fervour for the smiles of the *ingénue* of the company, Miss Sara Stevens, a clever young American actress, who subsequently came to London and was very successful. Our play was Coleman's "admired comedy" of "The Heir at Law," and I believe it was well done. Sothern was an excellent Dr. Pangloss; Mrs. Sothern played Cicely Homespun; Veith of my old regiment, a stage struck subaltern, who knew more about the



of Montreal, a stalwart Highlander, who with his seventy descendants had done his share in peopling Canada. He had been chosen as Orderly Sergeant to attend on the Czar in his visit to London after Waterloo, and never forgave that monarch for looking him over as if he had been a horse, and testing his muscles. He had been wounded repeatedly, and inspired us youngsters with great awe when he said one night in a lull in the conversation at the General's table, "I mind me weel, that this day fifty years ago I was lying on my back wi' a bullet in my thigh on the battlefield near Oyarzun, in the Pyrenees."

There was one officer in the garrison who deserves mention because of the mystery that always surrounded him—I should, to be quite exact, say *her*—a mystery never finally set at rest till after death. The P.M.O., or Principal Medical Officer in the Command, was Inspector-General Barry, who was fully proved to have been of the female sex. The circumstances under which she entered the service I have never heard explained, but of course she must have walked the hospital and regularly gained her diploma. It was an established fact that when stationed at the Cape (where, by the way, she had been personally known to my parents), she had fought a duel, and there was a belief that she had at one time passed through the married state. Suspicions of her true sex were constantly rife, and her appearance was always suggestive of femininity. A certain extravagance in dress was always noticeable in her, she wore a great silk bow on the breast of the uniform frock coat, dandified patent leather boots, and long-fingered white kid gloves, and always appeared in a long curly chestnut wig.

Social life was similar to that of Halifax, but on larger lines. There were two rather sharply divided sections, the British Colonial and the French Canadian elements, friendly enough with each other, but not coalescing, and speaking different languages. On one side were those of French origin, the direct descendants of the French settlers of generations back, their very names, Cartier, de Montignac, Perrault, recalling the Regency; on the other the English and Scotch emigrants, who had long made their

home in the Colony and prospered in it. The loyalty and firm allegiance of the French Canadians to England were undoubted, but still their sympathies were with France, and they looked to Paris rather than London. I was much struck with the strong Napoleonic cult that prevailed, especially among the youngsters of my own age; the great Emperor's portrait was everywhere, he was worshipped, and his great deeds were constantly discussed.

My brother A.D.C. with whom I kept house was a certain Captain St. Clair, better known in his own day as "Polak." Polak was of French Polish origin, and, of course, an enthusiastic admirer of the great Napoleon. I learnt a good deal from him, for he was an admirable linguist; indeed, in the Crimea, he was said to be the only English officer who spoke Russian, and he was taken chiefly for that reason by Sir William Eyre to be on his staff. Polak loved to go over the principal Napoleonic campaigns with me, to settle problems and to show how to overcome every difficulty. I knew my drill, and had little experience in strategy and tactics. He was the very reverse, full of large ideas, without the slightest knowledge of how troops should be moved. It may well be imagined how we fought and disagreed over details. St. Clair was a delightful companion, whimsical, full of crotchets and strong beliefs, especially addicted to spiritualism. One night, when we were sitting late in our little house in Lagauchetière Street, he frightened me considerably by declaring that a dead friend was present in the room, and in proof thereof pointed to a walking-stick which this friend had given him, which came out of the corner and walked across the room. I will not swear that it did not rattle among the other sticks, but it certainly did not come out of the corner. St. Clair was an admirable cook, and not the least of the debt I owe him was a practical lesson in the cooking of truffles in Madeira, or the best imitation of that fine wine we could find in our bachelor lodging.

An experience that could not but be useful to the formation of a boy's character came to me in Canada, when my chief went up to Toronto to assume the reins of government as substitute to Sir Edmund Head, the Governor-General,

sock and buskin than of the manual and platoon, was Ezekiel Homespun; Colonel, afterwards General Ingall, made a good Lord Duberly; and this humble chronicler was Lady Duberly, his wife. I have a shrewd suspicion that mine was not a strong performance, but I believe I looked the part, and at least I was fortunate in my "make up," for the ladies of the company fitted me out with many articles—long stockings, petticoats, and white wig—that do not, as a rule, form part of a subaltern's kit.

Sothern, or Stewart, as we knew him in those days, was waiting patiently for his chance, which came a year or two after, in Buckstone's offer of an engagement at the Haymarket. I believe that "Our American Cousin" had been played at Halifax, but Lord Dundreary was then only an inferior part, and Sothern appeared as Asa Trenchard. It is hardly remembered of him that he was an admirable all round actor. I have seen him one night in "Camille," the English version of the "Traviata," playing Armand Duval to perfection; Claude Melnotte another night; then the Kinchin in "The Flowers of the Forest," in an entirely novel and most mirth-compelling fashion. He will, however, always be best remembered as Lord Dundreary.

There has been some question as to the success he achieved when he made his *début* at the Haymarket. I was present, for the Colonel of my regiment had just come home, and, like the kindly old chief he was, had given me a dinner at his club and taken me to the play. It was not a brilliant "first night" gathering such as we see nowadays. The audience was scanty, and made up mainly of critics who were for a long time cold and indifferent. The reading of Sam's letter first woke them to the merit of the actor, a practically unknown man, and the applause was afterwards ungrudging and continuous. I perfectly well remember Buckstone standing at the wings with outstretched hands greeting Sothern warmly as he came off after his third call before the curtain. Yet the promised success was nearly jeopardised by the unexpected death of the Prince Consort, all the theatres were closed for a space, and the interval nearly killed Sothern's nascent fame.

## CHAPTER V.

*DÉBUT ON THE STAFF.*

To Montreal as A.D.C. to Sir William Eyre—Colleagues on the Staff—A Woman in Disguise—Social Life at Montreal—"Polak" and his Spiritualism—At Toronto—Sir Edmund Head—Six Months' Leave—Appointed Adjutant.

THE arrival in Halifax of my father's friend, Sir William Eyre, who commanded the forces in British North America, on a tour of inspection, led to a sudden great change in my fortunes. I have referred already to his kindness in the Crimea, and incidentally to my having joined his personal staff in Montreal. It began in an invitation to pay him a visit there, and I was presently taken on as an extra A.D.C. My duties were rather social than military; to discharge the well-known functions, to take the end of the table and carve, until happily the dinner *à la Russe* became the fashion, to keep the visiting book, and issue invitations. Sometimes, as befitted my youth, I played with the children, and was caught booted and spurred under the table hiding in some silly game. But I took my turn to accompany my General in his daily rides, and to sit in the waiting-room at the Office, when it fell to my lot to become the companion of men of much higher rank, and to hear matters discussed that were beyond my years.

The General Staff in the command included some distinguished soldiers with historic names. Colonel Thackwell, the military secretary, who had been all through the Sikh war; Colonel D'Urban was Quartermaster-General, son of Sir Benjamin, who was sponsor to the great seaport of Natal. We were very fond of a fine old Peninsular veteran, Major Macdonald, the Town Major

owing to the return of my predecessor. There is, perhaps, no finer position a young man can hold than that of regimental Adjutant with a Colonel who trusts him, a body of well disposed officers, and a strong regiment of fine physique and good aptitudes for soldiering. Our men had, unhappily, not mended their ways in the matter of drink, but they had steadily improved in appearance and in drill. They turned out always in spick and span order on parade, and held their heads high when passing through the barrack gate to swagger through the town. In these days of broken movements and widely extended loose formation, no one commanding a parade can appreciate the intense delight of holding 800 or 1,000 men like an instrument responding to the exercise of a single voice and will. It may willingly be conceded that to bring a great number to act in unison as one man is in our days an obsolete and useless achievement in drill, but the power to do so, and the perfect response made to the words of command, are among the unforgettable memories of an old soldier.



## CHAPTER VI.

## AT HYTHE AND SANDHURST.

The Musketry Course at Hythe—Stories of "Hurricane Bruce"—A Colonel's Fine Phrases—En Route for Belfast—Studying for the Staff College Examination—An Algebraic Problem Solved in Sleep—My Contemporaries at the Staff College—The Professors—Sir Edward Hamley and his Grim Humour—"His Royal Compass" and the Jokes that were Played upon Him—"Sticks" and "Stones"—Sports and Amusements at Sandhurst—The Riding School—The Debating Society—Colonel J. P. Nolan—The Mess—Visits to Charles Kingsley at Eversley—The "Final."

I COULD not remain Adjutant, as I have said, but I was permitted to extend my military education in another direction, and was in due course selected to go through a course of musketry at Hythe. The science of marksmanship had been recently invented with us under the auspices of General Hay, who had established a school on the suitable site of Hythe, with its extensive ranges of shingly beach. Like every new movement, it was a good deal laughed at, chiefly on account of the fanaticism of its promoters. They were a determined band, so strongly imbued with the paramount importance of the principles they held, and of the methods by which they should be instilled, that the new system of Musketry Instruction soon made its way, although later, progress was not so marked as in the earlier developments. But men learned to shoot, the theory of instruction was sound, and the practice, although not adequate, was sufficient to give them a certain amount of skill with their weapons. It was an article of faith with the new scheme that a soldier should be taught to shoot before he fired a single round of ball cartridge. This was to be effected by the perpetual use of two exercises, "position drill" and "aiming drill," which, it was claimed, familiarised the man with handling and holding his rifle, and



presently prepared him to make the best use of his eyesight. This is all ancient history to-day, and the extraordinary claims urged in favour of these methods of instruction have been somewhat modified. But the training was undoubtedly good, and was at least thoroughly believed in by all of us. The result was the wide dissemination of the new principles by certificated instructors, who were sent out into the Army to convert it to the new creed.

In regard to the spirit in which the new school of Musketry Instruction was received by some of the older officers, I may quote a story of the once well-known Colonel Bruce, of the Queen's, better known as "Hurricane Bruce," an eccentric person, some of whose sayings and doings are worth preserving. When Bruce went through the course at Hythe he mockingly expressed his satisfaction with it. Addressing the Commandant one day, he said—"General Hay, thanks to your excellent system of preliminary drills I am now at last, after twenty years of varied service, entrusted with ten copper caps which I am allowed to snap at a bull's-eye painted on a barrack wall." Colonel Bruce was a soldier of the old school, big, noisy, and somewhat overbearing. A story is told of him one day that at a Court Martial a sergeant was giving his evidence flippantly, and without showing sufficient respect to the Court. "Stop," cried Bruce, who was President, "surely I know you, sergeant? We were at school together and I remember you perfectly. We used to play hoop and marbles and ball together. Oh yes, I remember you." The sergeant, much taken aback, faltered, "No sir, hardly, for I got no schooling till I joined the regiment." "Then," thundered Bruce, changing his tone, "what the mischief do you mean by being so horribly familiar?"

After leaving the Queen's, Bruce was appointed one of the inspecting officers of the newly organised Volunteer Force, when it was the commendable desire of the authorities to keep it in good order and pat it on the back. Bruce's idea of giving effect to this may be gathered from the speech he made to the Volunteer Battalion on one of his first inspections. "I must tell you that when I commanded

a Regular regiment, which I did for several years, I had under my orders a certain number of ugly little chaps, small, badly set up, who could never be got to march straight or handle their arms properly. When the General came, and I wanted to make the best show possible, I used to hide these men away, put 'em in the cook house, or employ them in the mess premises, if necessary send 'em to hospital. They were a discreditable lot, bad enough to ruin the appearance of any regiment, but—upon my soul they were better than anything I've seen to-day."

There is another inspection story, when Bruce was taken to task by the General for permitting his drum-major to wear a badge on his shako which was not regulation. "You are perfectly right, sir, it is not regulation. Call the Master Tailor! Master Tailor, remove that honourable badge, which has been borne by the drum-major of the 2nd Queen's for upwards of two hundred years. It is not regulation. General, I bow to your ruling."

We were a zealous, hardworking lot at Hythe, who attended lectures religiously, and spent long hours on the ranges. Our talk was all of musketry, for here the ancient tradition that tabooed "shop" did not obtain, and after dinner we adjourned in parties to someone's quarters to study the subject, and practise lecturing with the blackboard, which was one of the qualifications we had to acquire. That branch of the business was under an enthusiast, Colonel Wilford, a veteran survivor of the famous Royal Staff Corps formed by Wellington in the Peninsula days.

His addresses to us, filled with fiery energy, and expatiating upon the merits of musketry instruction, were a constant joy. His fine phrases delighted us. There was one lecture that especially amused us, beginning with the words—"The Utopian may shrink from the horrors of war, but the practical philosopher can see no prospect of its cessation," and a clever caricaturist amongst us drew an admirable sketch of both characters, the Utopian shrinking and the philosopher calmly arranging his weapons of defence. Several lectures dealt, of course, with musketry regulations in every detail, and there was one in particular,



showing how a rifle should be cleaned, which gave rise to the catch question, "How should the water be poured into the barrel?" No answer would satisfy the Colonel but the exact words of the text. It was to be done "with" something—and the imperfectly informed would vainly suggest with a teacup or with a tin pot, the only right answer being "with care."

I got successfully through the course, and obtained a first class certificate, which was accounted the blue ribbon of Hythe. I had some hopes, indeed, of being appointed to the instruction staff, but unfortunately, although I had fully mastered the theory, I failed in the practical part, and proved an indifferent marksman. Very properly, efficiency in this was deemed a first qualification, according to the old dogma so strongly emphasised in the drill book, that "a third class shot was an encumbrance to the battalion." But I was entitled to instruct, although I had no immediate opening. Through the cross purposes of the authorities I had lost the regimental instructorship of the regiment; although the Colonel had selected me at headquarters and sent me home, the Horse Guards had seen fit to forestall him by choosing a man from the depôt, who joined at Hythe direct, completed the course, and was already on his way to Nova Scotia. It was a bitter disappointment to me, but it had the effect of strengthening my resolve to study for the Staff College competitive examination, and I began reading directly I got to Belfast, where I was now ordered to proceed.

A word first as to my voyage thither. The route given us was roundabout but cheap, and, following the common dictum, nasty. We were a small party, ten or fifteen at most, men of various regiments, among them a married sergeant with his wife and children. We travelled across country from Westernhanger (Hythe) to Reading on the lower level, crossed with our baggage to the upper, and so reached Bristol by nightfall, where we found billets. Next day we embarked on a small steamer without any accommodation for passengers. The men were to remain on deck for the thirty or forty hours' passage, also the sergeant's wife and her children. There was a small

cabin allotted to me below in which I bestowed the men's rifles. I had to lay in provisions for the whole party, and we started with the prospect of a most uncomfortable journey.

It was indeed far worse than our worst anticipations. The weather was bad from the first. It was blowing great guns when we left the river, and on reaching the mouth of the Bristol Channel we ran straight into a tremendous gale with a raging sea running and breaking over us continually. The men, being without cover, were drenched to the skin, and the sergeant's poor wife with her children would have been in a most miserable plight had I not taken them down to share my cabin, in which, indeed, I made the whole of my party take shelter. We were encountering one of the most memorable storms that have ever ravaged the home seas, and it is still recorded in history by the dread tale of devastation and shipwreck, notably the wreck of the *Royal Charter*, which struck off Holyhead, and went down with every soul on board. We battled with it bravely during the greater part of the day, till at length the captain came to me saying that he felt obliged to put into the nearest port, which was Swansea. Happily we passed the Mumbles without accident. The gale lasted a couple of days, but at last we re-embarked and eventually reached our destination, Belfast.

I had but little hope of success in the Staff College examination, for I had no money to spare on instruction, and was unable, like the bulk of my competitors, to enter myself at a crammer's establishment, such as Lendy's, from which a large proportion of the Staff College graduates proceeded. But I found a brilliant young scholar at the Belfast College who was willing to read mathematics with me for a moderate price, and from him I learnt much. I may relate here a curious occurrence, showing how fugitive is memory even within a few hours. I had worked hard one night in the solution of Quadratic Equations, and was utterly baffled by one more than usually stiff. At length I resolved to turn in and leave it to my fresher morning brain. The moment I laid my head on the pillow I saw the result

clearly worked out to the end, and jumping out of bed I forthwith committed it to paper. Next day I had not the slightest recollection of the circumstance, and I was amazed to find the written solution on my desk.

There were no garrison instructors in those days to whom I could apply for counsel and advice, and military books were not plentiful. But I presently got away from Belfast on a long winter's leave to my father's house in the Isle of Man, where I had access to a moderately good library, and I worked steadily on through spring and summer till the date of the examination arrived, some time in July. It was held in Chelsea, and there were some forty candidates for the fifteen vacancies, so I had not the remotest hope—where all seemed to possess superior attainments, and were certainly much older (I was twenty-two)—of winning a place. In the end I came out fifth on the list, but I am free to confess that our standard, compared to that of later days, was not particularly high.

Since then, 1860, the Staff College has turned out some 5,000 or 6,000 graduates, and the value of the training, as indicated by the results, has been often questioned, especially during the late great war. An attempt was made to strike a balance between graduates and non-graduates, and to show that the advantage lay with the latter, but it is not quite admitted, and certainly it has never been proved. No good purpose would be served by instituting comparisons, but I am sufficiently imbued with *esprit de collège* to be ready to maintain that the men of my own time and thereabouts have done uncommonly well in after life, as will be seen from the mention of a few names. There are few survivors, most have gone over to the majority, but I like to think of them as good men and true who have risen to distinction more or less marked in many lines besides military, and who undoubtedly owed much to the Staff College. There was first, and before all, the ill-fated Sir George Colley, whose deserts were far greater than his reward, and who failed chiefly from the lack of the one indispensable condition of a successful military career, that of good luck. There was William Elles, a man of rare mental gifts, who died all



too soon ; and Sir Thomas Baker, also a first class staff officer and sound tactical leader. There was Cecil East, long the Governor of the Military College ; and Wilsone Black, who led the attack made after Isandlwana ; and "Tommy" Gonne, of the 17th Lancers ; also Sir Evelyn Wood, who is still with us. In lines other than military such men as Henry Hozier, Colonel Nolan, William Palliser, and Colonel Barrington have made their mark.

The Staff College of those early days did not enjoy great popularity. It was not appreciated by seniors, and was too often disliked and despised by juniors because it gave claims to advancement which were at variance with the old rules of patronage. We had often to make headway against prejudice. I remember for myself that when making my bow before a great official at the Horse Guards at the end of my College course, I was told that I had loafed there long enough, and that it was time for me to go back to my regiment and do a little duty. I had fondly hoped that after criticising the campaigns of Wellington and Napoleon I already possessed the makings of a great commander. No doubt it was a wholesome tonic to be snubbed by one's regimental C.O., but at the time I shared the disgust of a comrade for whom I heard the Colonel apologise at an inspection parade : " You must make allowance for him, sir, because he has only just returned from the Staff College." The Generals to whom the newly-instructed Staff Officers were attached were not always appreciative or complimentary. " We want none of that nonsense here," said one, when his Brigade-Major suggested trying the new order for attack as practised in Prussia ; and I know another who contemptuously attached a magnifying glass to one of his draft minutes because his short-sighted Staff Officer—a mere student—could not decipher the writing.

One good point can never be denied to Staff College men, the wish to improve themselves, to get out of the ruck and qualify by study for the higher grades. Men who felt they had something in them, who at least were ambitious and not afraid of work, were afforded an opportunity of showing what they were worth. In my time work and play

were happily alternated ; we sometimes worked in our play, sometimes played in our work. We benefited by our long rides about the neighbourhood (Sandhurst) in acquiring a practical knowledge of the country ; when we called at any of the hospitable houses around, we discussed plans for putting it into a state of defence, or calculated the number of troopers its stables would hold. We were a light-hearted lot, being mostly young and very sanguine about the future ; we never took life too seriously, and could joke even in the lecture-room in presence of the gravest professors.

Some of these professors afforded us a great deal of amusement ; some were shy, some overbearing, some, I fear, not too fond of work. There was Captain W., a professor whose province was military law and administration, and who was put to utter confusion one day when detailing the method of hospital transport to India. An irreverent student, who afterwards became the head of military education in India, checked the lecturer by asking him to explain whether "four dhoolies carried one coolie, or four coolies carried one dhoolie." The lecture abruptly terminated that day. In mathematics we had two learned professors, one of whom loved to run riot with his chalk over the blackboard in the expansion of equations. I remember how "Benjy" (as we called him) was completely upset when one of his class suggested that he had lost some of his  $p$ 's and  $q$ 's. We had another way, I am constrained to admit, of dealing with Benjy when he wearied us with his interminable series of  $x$ 's and  $y$ 's. Someone would grate his boots over the floor (there were no carpets in our lecture room), and the signal, which meant "We have had enough," quickly roused the whole class to do the same. At this expression of disapproval, not to say mutiny, Benjy would dash his cleaning-rag over the blackboard in despair, erase all the figures and run out of the room. The other (and senior) mathematical master was an admirable teacher, who always called the diagram he drew a "figewer." He was a clergyman, and we always knew when "Johnnie" (his familiar name) was going on a holiday by his exchanging his white for a bright blue tie.

Johnnie treated the advanced mathematics, and I well remember his measureless contempt for one student who complained that he was unable to understand some knotty point in quadratics. This confession of ignorance drove Johnnie to say, "Then I don't know what good you are doing here."

These were the civilians. We had soldier teachers also, who might perhaps exact more reverence, but they were much of our own rank and standing—members of the same mess; and with one exception, their authority did not greatly impress us. The exception was Sir Edward (then Lieutenant-Colonel) Hamley, at that time professor of military history—a subject which some say he mastered in teaching, but which he mastered to some purpose, as is proved by the valuable works he subsequently contributed to military literature. Hamley disliked extremely being interrupted; he spoke rather fast, and when he was dealing with foreign names, rather indistinctly, so that we could not always follow him in our notes. On one occasion a certain student (I often see him now at my club) was bold enough to ask him to repeat the names of two villages in Bohemia connected with Frederick the Great's campaign of 1757. Hamley paused, looked daggers at the questioner, repeated the names rather more indistinctly than before, and went on.

Hamley was full of grim humour, which he sometimes vented on the essays submitted to him. His remarks at the end of each were often marvels of incisive criticism. He was intolerant of verbosity, and laughed at any pretentious expressions. "Why," he asked once, "should German mountains be given French names in an English essay?" . . . "This is mere balderdash," he said of another effusion by a man who has since commanded an army in the field.

We had two other military professors—one for drawing, the other for fortification and artillery. The first, Captain F——, will long be remembered at the College, where many stories of him are preserved. I recall one in particular, which may have grown by this time into a "chestnut," but I



will risk repeating it. It was on the occasion of a visit of inspection made by the Prince Consort (now, alas! very many years ago), and His Royal Highness was greatly interested in the plans and sketches exhibited by the students. "How were these executed?" he asked—"with what instrument, I mean?" "With a prismatic Highness, your Royal Compass," promptly answered Captain F——.

This professor was generally called "His Royal Compass" in after years. Candour compels me to say that, although a beautiful artist in topographical drawing, he was not a good teacher. With those who showed aptitude, or whom he thought industrious, he would take pains. It was a good thing to be thought well of by F——. The advantage came with the allotment of marks for work done. On one occasion, when dealing with the triangulation, which was a part of our surveying course, F—— accepted as the standard of excellence the work of two "good boys" who stuck to their work and never went to croquet parties or ran up to town. All our triangulations were compared with this, and were marked high or low the nearer or farther they were from the model. Ill-natured people declared afterwards that the "good boys" had copied their triangulation from an old one executed by a previous class, and that it was in due course proved to be inaccurate. This, let us hope, was only a *bon histoire*. F——, good easy man, was often the victim and plaything of the more artful among us. There were two designing students, neither of them first-class draughtsmen, who practised a really clever trick upon F——, by which they often got him to execute an inch or two of their surveys. The plan was to beg him to visit them at work, when one of them would say, "I'm rather in a mess, F——, please look at my sketch." F—— would agree willingly enough, his fingers itching all the time to set to work. Then the students would begin some new and generally spicy story, and, while F—— listened more and more amused, would put the pencil into his unconscious hands, with the result that the sketch was soon marvellously improved. As the first student's story finished number two would try the same manœuvre; after-

wards each would copy the other's piece that had been added by the master's hand.

Speaking from my own experience, I certainly learnt little from Captain F——. He once tried to explain to me the uses of the vernier scale, and after half-an-hour's talk I was glad to go to a fellow student who had the admirable faculty for teaching which has since made him one of the best known of military crammers. Again, I can remember an amusing incident connected with the triangulation above mentioned. On this we worked in pairs, choosing our own base-line where we pleased. I worked with a friend and house-mate (it was in the days before the completion of the new Staff College building), and he and I used to toil out, painfully bearing the theodolite and heavy chain, to a point somewhere near Wishmoor Cross, where we proceeded to take our shots and work out the calculations. After I don't know how many days' laborious work we found ourselves still unable to "close in" the triangulation, and at last appealed to F——. He kindly promised to go and visit us at our work. I can see him now tittupping over the heather on his fat grey pony, which one of us held while he applied his eye to the theodolite. He looked and looked again, then slapping his thigh with a shout of satisfaction, cried, "By Jove! an index error!" and from that day to this I should have remained ignorant of what it meant but for the kindly assistance of the fellow student who taught me the use of the vernier scale.

Our professors in foreign languages were characters in their way. Herr D—— was a stout old German who refused altogether to teach beginners. I had some idea of taking up German as part of my course, but as I had only a smattering of the language Herr D—— gave me no encouragement. He assured me that I could not "make it pay," not so as to score marks, that is to say, at the final examination. But I waited through one of his lectures to watch his method of procedure. Although he would not allow me to attempt the acquisition of German in a couple of years, the thing was by his showing the simplest thing in the world. He merely drew an arrow on the board, with



the feathers at one end, the barbed point at the other, and a fixed swivel in the centre. This, he explained, exactly fitted the construction of the German sentence, and the positions of the relative, antecedent and verb. When once this difficulty was mastered, there could be no more trouble with the German language.

I knew something of the maddening intricacy of the German declensions, and as I could not count upon much assistance from Herr D——, I walked out of his lecture-room into that of the Hindustani professor—a very different stamp of man. X—— was an enthusiastic Orientalist who had never been in the East, if I remember aright, and had no great colloquial facility, which was a grievance with those who were going to India; but he was profoundly versed in most Eastern languages, alive or dead—Sanskrit, Hindu, Persian, Ordoo, Tamil, and Telegoo. And, ever ready to improve himself, you could give X—— no greater pleasure than to bring him some nearly undecipherable “chit” in the most broken *shikast* character; he would seize upon the letter, his black eyes beaming with joy, and puzzle over it for hours. The pains he took with his pupils, his patience and unwearied good nature, will never be forgotten by them.

I may record here a curious psychological experience of my own. Hindustani was the first language I ever spoke; I was born in India, and learnt it from my ayah. I had absolutely and entirely forgotten it, but as I continued my studies it came back to me; I seemed to know words intuitively, never forgot them, and had no trouble with pronunciation. Another case of the same kind was Colley's, who had the same experience with German. This resuscitation of an almost extinct memory served me so well that I made my Hindustani “pay” extremely well at the “final,” and had much pleasure in announcing that fact to Herr D——.

Our French professor, Cambier, was a man we all liked and respected—a veteran soldier who had been in his time a chivalrous enemy, and was now become the comrade and friend of his traditional foes. Cambier had served in the

Grande Armée, he was a cavalry officer, and had fought against us at Waterloo. He was an Imperialist to the very finger tips, and we could forgive him, readily enough, his unfailing hero-worship of his great Napoleon. To the last he taught us "out of Napoleon," so to speak; for him the purest and most perfect French was to be found in the despatches, and he took his dictation invariably from the Emperor's correspondence. When we sat down to work we wrote in the heading, quite as a matter of course: "*Napoléon à Joseph; mon frère—*." Equally well we knew how to finish, the concluding words that the Emperor had adopted from the style of former kings of France: "*Sur ce, may God have you in His holy keeping.*" Cambier was very precise about his punctuation—"Virgule" came like a word of command; and at the last, "*un point; c'est tout,*" was given as if he was dismissing a parade. Poor, dear old Cambier! he came to a full stop many long years ago.

The study of foreign languages in our time went far beyond those for which professors were provided. It was easier to make a smattering of them pay than the same amount of attention could extract from the natural sciences, and although "Stinks," as we styled our learned professor in chemistry, and "Stones," our geological instructor, had full classes, because they were there on the spot, most of us tried to turn the vacations to good account by following up languages at home and abroad. I know I learnt a good deal of Italian from my sisters' governess; others went further afield, into Spain and Portugal, as far as Greece, and did well in Spanish, Portuguese, and modern Greek. This was all in the pursuit of "marks." Competition was the order of the day, then; to fight for a place on the list at the final examination agitated all but a few philosophical spirits who frankly resolved from the first to be satisfied with a "pass." There was a perpetual contest, a not unfriendly but ever jealous rivalry, under the spur of which many devices were tried. Men would go up to town secretly, seeking private instructors or special books, we were deeply anxious to know if others were working "seriously," to know what line or what method would be adopted for any particular



"scheme" or military problem set for our solution. One comrade was christened "the policeman" from his peripatetic and detective habits; he was always going round to spy out what others were doing. It was said that in those days we carried a "competition" even into our walks abroad, and that if two or three went out together for a constitutional the pace would be gradually increased until we were all in a run.

But it was not all competition; we had many sports and amusements to set off against hard reading. There was hunting for those who could afford it; the H. H. was within reach, and "Garth's" pretty close, while the staghounds met sometimes at Swinley Park or Lock's Farm, half a dozen miles away. Later the College had its own drag, which, I believe, gave some excellent sport. Every student was allowed forage for a horse, and kept one, whether bought, borrowed, or hired. They had lots to do, these "crops" of ours. In the right season there was generally a steeplechase, with a larger field at the start than the finish; for I believe in my year only one jockey got over all the obstacles and came in at a slow trot past the post. They took us out to country houses, and if we were to dine and sleep often carried our evening clothes in saddle-bags. One man always rode his charger (it had been in the Balaclava business) to the station at Farnborough, five miles distant, with his groom on a second horse to lead back the other. We did not ride our own horses in the school, there were troopers for the purpose, but we used them in reconnaissances across country, in one of which, by the way, a certain officer who was no great horseman came off, with results never seen probably before or since. When he was picked up he had lost his boots, which were found still in the stirrups of the saddle he had left so suddenly, and this, although he had been riding in overalls strapped down. Of course, the straps had given way.

The riding school was a terror to some. Captain Brook, a riding master of the old school, was very free with the whip, still freer with his tongue, and his sergeant-major, a splendid specimen of the lancer (17th, I think),

was very imperious, not to say forgetful of his place. I can remember an affair with a very senior officer, to whom, seeing something amiss with his saddlery, he had given the order abruptly, "Turn in, No. 9." He was a Lieutenant-Colonel, No. 9, and he did not like it; I can see his haughty air as he replied, "Why, pray?" and jogged on. As for old Brook, soured and disappointed by many facers from adverse fortune, he was always a gentleman, and was accordingly forgiven much.

We had many other diversions—racquets at the Cadet College, croquet and afternoon tea in the neighbourhood (there was as yet no lawn tennis), and occasionally some rather farcical cricket; "old" against "new," in which the fielders were often accommodated with chairs to rest on between the "overs." A Debating Society was started for the encouragement of public speaking; one subject I remember, "The Good and Evil of War Correspondents," was argued out at length by men who have since had practical experience on both sides: as correspondents eager for news and as generals anxious to edit it. A politician who has since made a name, not exactly on the right side as many may say, first practised oratory at our Debating Club. In those days he was commonly called "the young Napoleon," but he was more ambitious of military than of political distinction. Of all our hard workers Colonel J. P. Nolan was the most indefatigable; he took a good place, I remember, and afterwards was noted as a promising artillery scientist. Now he is likely to be longer remembered as a Home Ruler than as the inventor of a useful range finder.

Ours was a very cheery mess—a little rough and ready at first, before our own house was built, and we were lodged in a wing of the Cadet College. How many of us are left who remember the old mess waiter, whom we called "the pirate"? A stout, rather slipshod old gentleman, who always answered rather proudly to his nickname, which he owed to certain dark allusions made by him to a far-back phase in his chequered career, when he had assisted in making his victims "walk the plank." His victim in our mess was a sort of page-boy, who had strongly developed the

mysterious faculty of becoming cataleptic. I have seen him when insensible at a *séance* stuck as full of pins as a pin-cushion. Both the "Pirate" and he soon disappeared when we occupied the pleasant and spacious mess-rooms, prettily decorated and well furnished, in the new College. Only one decorative article was a bone of contention—the buffalo horns—on which our mess President had wasted a large sum, and of which no one approved. He was a character, that mess President. We knew him as the "Alchemist," and declared that he possessed the secret of the Philosopher's Stone, working somewhere underground in the dead of night at the transmutation of metals. What is absolute fact, however, is that he could work beautifully in gold and silver, and if you gave him a sovereign would turn it into a ring or any kind of pretty ornament.

We kept no very late hours—many, indeed, especially in the anxious time just preceding examinations, did not dine, but took a late lunch, so as to be fresh in the evening, ready to burn the midnight oil; others rose betimes to read when most clearheaded in the early morning hours. Lucky those who were privileged to look in at Eversley Rectory of a Sunday evening, and find a welcome at the supper table of Charles Kingsley. It was a pleasant walk to Eversley, one of many such to other hospitable places, and I can remember how we lost our road, a couple of us, returning homewards very late (no imputation will be cast, I trust), and at last came to a finger-post dimly visible in the darkness. It was a brilliant idea for one to climb on the back of the other, strike a match, and read the indication upon the extended arm. Of course, we found that we had been walking in an entirely wrong direction. I had another difference of opinion 'as to route with a distinguished officer who has since become the head of the Quartermaster-General's Department. It took place about midnight, among the dense pine woods above the College. We agreed to go different roads, but I am prepared to swear that I got in first by half an hour.

There was no more dining out, and but little real joy at the mess as the term drew to its close, and the great ex-



amination drew uncomfortably near. No more bear fighting and high cockalorum, the latter, a very frequent after-mess amusement, at which I have seen the Commandant himself, a very distinguished officer, bearing the burthen of half a dozen students; no more wild racing for the day's *Times* from the mess-table to the ante-room with a wild "Hurroish!" "Hell for Leather!" the moment the cloth was drawn. No more whist, at which a few sober spirits enjoyed themselves regularly during term time. Pale faces at breakfast, long faces at lunch, and dismal dinners were the rule. Each man prepared himself in his own way. Some read to the last minute, and looked so charged with knowledge, so filled with facts, that they hardly dared to sit down or move their heads; others affected a careless, jocund air, as though the whole thing was a lark—mere child's play; some hunted the day before, others ran up to town, but one and all entered the halls in all sober seriousness, and were very much chastened and subdued before the week's ordeal was over.

I have no very keen recollection of our "Final," which was, I suppose, like all examinations, full of chances and *contretemps*, the latter predominating. But it was a week of keen anxiety and great pressure. The character of the examiners was a very serious matter to us, and the line they took; we grumbled greatly when the questions seemed too hard.

There was one examiner, I believe, who gave great offence. He had been a colleague but a year or two previously, and yet he was traitor enough to set us a paper we thought terribly and unfairly stiff. We were, I think, much disappointed in the great Todhunter, whose mathematical problems were also very severe, but this professor was a humane person, and promised when we protested to give marks on two-thirds of his paper. He was an appreciative examiner, too, and was so much struck by the answers sent in by one of the students (the late Sir William Elles, who died eight years ago at Nainee Tal) that he begged he might be presented to him at the end of the examination.

## CHAPTER VII.

## FROZEN UP.

*The Trent Affair—To Halifax Again—Icebound at Sydney, Cape Breton—Recalled to Halifax—A Journey by Sleigh—Promoted Captain—Rejoin Staff College and Pass Out—Attached to Royal Artillery at Woolwich and to 10th Hussars at the Curragh—Running Away with an Engine and Train—Intemperate Fault-finding—An Adventure with Colley.*

MY course of study was abruptly broken into by the scare of the threatened war with the United States. The forcible seizure of Messrs. Mason and Slidell, the Southern Commissioners, when on the high seas and under the British flag, created such a storm that rupture became imminent, and Lord Palmerston backed his indignant protest by a strong display of force. He decided to pour troops instantly into Canada, and never was prompter or more effective action taken. My regiment was still at Halifax, and when the Duke of Cambridge came down to make his Christmas inspection of the Staff College the number of my regiment caught his eye. "The 63rd? Isn't it in Nova Scotia?" he turned to ask Sir Alfred Horsford, then D.A.G. at the Horse Guards, and I was ordered forthwith to rejoin. A week or two later I embarked on the s.s. *Canada*, of the Cunard line, and found myself one of seventy-seven officers of various regiments and corps all bound across the Atlantic. We struck a favourable gale just beyond Fastnett, which we carried with us, and made a (then) record passage of eight days. My chief recollection of that voyage was that we "did ourselves" uncommonly well. It used to be the rule with the Cunard line to make no charge to officers for wines, as a return for the messing allowance of three or four shillings per head paid to the Company, and champagne (*gratis*) was flowing at our table

at every meal. The secret was well preserved, and when we were taxed with extravagant tastes, we wagged our heads and talked about field allowance to explain our being so flush of money. But by-and-by the truth got out, with consequences that must have seriously depleted the *Canada's* wine cellar.

Halifax was transformed from the sleepy, dead-alive garrison town I had left three years before. It was now the principal base of operations, at which a large proportion of the reinforcements for Canada were landed, to be pushed on into Canada through New Brunswick. A competent Quartermaster-General's staff, many of them most distinguished officers, including Colonel Wolseley, as he was then, had been dispatched from England to make the arrangements, but as Lord Wolseley tells us in his "Soldier's Life," one of the slowest transports had been selected for their conveyance across the Atlantic, and as they were twenty-nine days on the voyage which we in the *Canada* had accomplished in eight, they were sent through the United States *via* Boston, with their titles erased from their baggage, for they might have been at any moment in an enemy's country. The arrangements made for forwarding the troops were admirable. The plan followed was to take ship and land at St. John's, New Brunswick, and thence travel stage by stage by the roads now deep in snow to Riviere du Loup, on the St. Lawrence, whence there was a railway to Quebec and Montreal. The troops were carried by an excellent service of sleighs that plied backwards and forwards, each bearing a small party of men a certain distance, and returning, after delivering them, for a fresh lot. By this means—and the system worked most efficiently—a considerable number of men, a force of some ten thousand troops in all, overcame the difficulties that forbade approach in mid-winter by the now icebound St. Lawrence.

Unfortunately, I cannot speak of this from personal experience, for I did not accompany my regiment on their long and dreary sleigh ride. The crisis was at an end almost as soon as we landed in Halifax, for the United States Government had surrendered the Confederate envoys taken

off the *Trent*, and Mr. President Lincoln, throwing the blame upon an over-officious naval captain, tendered to the British Government many protestations of regret. The despatch of troops into Canada was not stayed, however, and the regiments continued to pass on in the way described long after I had left Halifax homeward bound. I had a good friend in the Chief of the staff to Sir Hastings Doyle, at that time commanding in Nova Scotia, and it was represented to the General that I, with other staff students, was missing a valuable part of the course of instruction at the College. Whereupon Sir Hastings took upon himself to authorise our return, although at a later date he would probably have cabled for instructions, but at that time (1862) the first Atlantic cable had not been laid. I was in many ways luckier than some of my fellow students, for while I was detained *en route*, they reached England and were immediately desired to re-embark, as Sir Hastings' action was disapproved of as hasty and premature.

I was detained, as I have said, and by a curious chain of circumstances. It had been decided to give me the command of a small body of invalids and time-expired men who were being sent home, and we were embarked on one of the returning transports, the largest, indeed, of the whole fleet, the once well-known Anchor liner *Adriatic*, about the finest steamship then crossing the Atlantic. She had been chartered for the conveyance of two whole battalions of Guards, and, I believe, a battery of Artillery also. She was of great steaming power, but had been just too late to disembark her live freight at Riviere du Loup, and narrowly escaped being frozen up in the St. Lawrence (but she was destined, notwithstanding, to make very close acquaintance with ice). She had come round to Nova Scotia, had landed her passengers, and was now in Halifax Harbour waiting to coal and go home. There were reasons why she should not be delayed, for she was an expensive ship, her hire having been fixed at £10,000 monthly so long as she was employed by the Admiralty. At the same time she burnt a great deal of coal, and coal was scarce in Halifax; so the senior naval officer ordered her round to Sydney, Cape



Breton, where coal was to be found in great quantities, and the coal mines came down almost to the water's edge. We made a prosperous run, two hundred miles more or less, between the evening and the morning, and on going on deck I found that we were anchored in a fine, land-locked harbour, about half a mile from the shore. The sea was perfectly still, the temperature low, and the whole landscape to the far horizon was covered with snow. Snow lay thick upon the pines which stretched in almost endless monotony all round. There were wide fields of ice floe near the harbour mouth, and the whole aspect of the scene was quite Arctic in its winter desolation.

Steps were taken, but, as I thought, in a rather leisurely fashion, to lay in coal. The skipper paid a visit to the mine agents, and was promised that within a day or two lighters should be put off with a full supply. We had a Naval Agent on board, a Commander, R.N., now a retired Admiral, whom I have the pleasure of constantly seeing at my club, and he has often reminded me of his great anxiety at the slowness that characterised the coaling. He and the skipper were no doubt at cross purposes. The Naval Agent was intent upon saving public money, and dying to be upstick and away; the skipper, representing the owners, did not object to a delay that brought in a certain £10,000 a month without any wear and tear. The question was settled between them by the weather. Suddenly, in the very midst of the coaling, it turned much colder, the ice across the mouth of the harbour closed in with great loose hummocks, the water in between showed the smooth glassy surface that it assumes when about to freeze hard. The steam tug was the first to take alarm, and with its attendant lighters made in all haste for the shore. As it was the passage was greatly impeded, and we saw the fast thickening ice breaking away on each side of her bows. That evening everything that floated hitherto was caught hard and fast, and next morning we could descend the companion ladder at the side and step down upon glare ice, which afforded many miles of excellent skating.

The Naval Commander was in despair, but he would not

submit to be thus imprisoned without a determined effort to break through. There was a strong discussion, almost an altercation, but his word was law until the safety of the ship was in question, and then the captain was naturally entitled to have his way. He got up steam more than once and essayed to move, but with small success, and at length he positively refused to risk the ship's plates against the ice. It may be well to complete the story of her detention. It began, I believe, early in January, and we became more and more tightly nipped until the end of February, when a series of violent gales dislodged a portion of the ice, and we could see blue water towards the mouth of the harbour, at no great distance ahead. The Agent was resolved to make a bold bid for liberty, and he contracted with gangs of longshoremen and miners to cut the ship out with hatchets and ice saws. As the result of one day's incessant labour, a clear channel was formed leading to the piece of water, and steps were taken, the fires lighted, steam got up, and orders issued to go to sea at daybreak next morning. I remember well hearing the captain's voice as he turned into his cabin on the hurricane deck, calling loudly, "Quartermaster, call me when she swings head to wind."

Everyone was on the alert for the start, and at the first revolution of the screw we raised a slight cheer, in which I hardly think the captain joined, as he did not wish to be released; but he was up on the bridge conning the ship as she slowly made her way down the improvised channel. We made good progress, and all promised well till we passed through the open space and were then brought up by a fresh ice-field, extending far out almost to the horizon, and effectually barring all further movement. I was standing with the captain and the Naval Agent on the bridge, and shall never forget the disappointed look on the latter's face when he said "She'll never do it, Captain B——, we may just as well go back to our berth." The failure was so fully evident that we turned tail forthwith, and had soon resumed our old position, where the ship remained till the month of April. For myself, I had better luck, for I was soon recalled to Halifax overland, and made a rather eventful



journey, which ended in my embarking in the Cunarder s.s. *Arabia* for Liverpool direct.

It was a dull, disappointing outlook when we were first nipped in the ice of Sydney Harbour, with no hopes of release for many months to come. We lay off the little hamlet of Sydney Heads, and there was little to see and less to do on shore. The most striking object was a shoemaker's shop, with the inscription "Sir Thomas Tobin." Whether a knight or a baronet of Nova Scotia, the bearer of the title could not tell us, and I believe he was self-dubbed. For the rest, Sydney Heads was no more than a mining village of no pretensions, but we were fortunate enough to be within easy distance of the town of Sydney, the capital of Cape Breton, a pretty, lively little place with plenty of social attractions, and we soon found many kind friends, who welcomed us to their houses and entertained us hospitably. The days passed pleasantly enough. On board we lived on the fat of the land. The ship had been victualled for a large mess of Guardsmen and gunners, and the owners anxious to treat them well, had laid in abundant supplies, fish, flesh, and fowl were kept fresh in the ice house, and lasted our small party, the ship's officers, the Naval Agent, and myself until the very end. There was an excellent cellar, and we drew upon it liberally. A favourite after-dinner amusement (one I have never seen elsewhere) was to hack at a potato on a steel fork with our knives in turn, and whoso struck it off was bound to stand a fresh bottle. The game became very exciting when the potato had become so sliced that only the very smallest particle remained on the fork.

The days slipped by without any exciting episodes. I spent the morning at my books, of which, unfortunately, I had but a limited supply, trying to make up for my interrupted studies at the College. I devoted myself more particularly to Hindustani, a language little in keeping with my frozen surroundings, but I was happy in the possession of some of the standard works, the "Baital-Pachisi," the "Bagh-o-Bahar," the "Tota-hani," Forbes' Grammar, and a couple of dictionaries. I have referred already to the

facility with which I acquired Hindustani, but it was no doubt to some extent due to the opportunity for study afforded me when icebound. Alas! any knowledge I obtained of Oriental languages was never of the slightest use to me, for although I made several attempts to transfer my services to India I never succeeded, and when my regiment was ordered there, reasons had led to my retirement, as will presently be told. After lunch at Sydney I passed from labour to refreshment, and felt fully entitled to enjoy myself as best I could. The sleigh came round from the village, and met me at the foot of the companion ladder, for I drove straight across the beaten snow of the frozen harbour to Sydney by the track marked out by posts of evergreen firs. There was plenty of fun to be had in Sydney, joyous parties and picnics, to which, as in Halifax, we proceeded in our sleighs two and two, each with his charming companion, and the young ladies of Sydney had a full share of the attractiveness of the Nova Scotian family.

"Nothing is certain but the unforeseen," and the change came unexpectedly in a sudden order to return by road to Halifax. The summons came at an inconvenient moment, for just now the solan geese were in flight southwards, and I had joined a party organised for a battue at some distance from Sydney. We were to lie concealed behind shelters of compacted snow, surrounded by decoy geese manufactured from wood. The party never came off, for the following afternoon I took a seat in the mail sleigh bound for a six days' continuous drive from Sydney to Halifax, or more exactly Windsor, a station on the short line of railway between Halifax and Truro. It promised to be a tedious, monotonous, and, in its way, fatiguing journey, for we pushed on without delay, changing horses and drivers at each stage, but getting no more sleep than could be snatched by dozing in the buffalo robes as we glided on and on, hour after hour, and mile after mile. The question of creature comforts assumes great proportions in such a journey as this, and I can still remember the repugnance with which I learnt to view the unvarying and inevitable meals of ham and eggs, the staple dish at the change houses.



The pigs of those parts are raised almost entirely upon a diet of salt dog-fish, and the flavour would be quite inefaceable even if not revived in later years at Good Friday dinners.

"Luck," says the Spanish proverb, "is for those it meets," and I shall always remember this long journey, for I received about halfway a piece of important news. My ride, which had taken me the whole length of Cape Breton Island, and brought me at length to the Gut of Canso, which separates it from the mainland, led me to the small town of Antigonish, at which we arrived about midday. The first thing I saw was the placard of a local newspaper, announcing the loss at sea of the troopship *Spartan*, and the death of Captain Hand, 63rd Regiment. This meant promotion for me to Captain, a most important step to an impecunious officer with no means of purchasing promotion. In those now archaic days when an officer's advancement depended on the length of his purse, I had no hope of rising to the rank of Captain, and yet it meant everything to me—an increase of pay, still a mere pittance, under £200 per annum, but enough to live on, and the strong probability, if not the certainty, that I should be given a staff appointment when I had passed out of the College, a perfectly hopeless prospect so long as I remained a subaltern. There were, of course, some lingering doubts in my mind, first as to the accuracy of the news, which I soon settled by telegraphing to Halifax, and secondly as to whether the step would go in the regiment. As to the latter, I consoled myself by remembering that we were under "service" conditions, and that I was entitled by unwritten law to succeed to such a vacancy as poor Hand's; but although I was the senior subaltern, the first on the list, I could not forget that the Lieutenant just below me, Graves, had shared the risks upon the *Spartan*, and had a kind of moral right to the step. He had made a desperate effort to carry succour to his brother officer. The mishap had occurred in the open Atlantic during the terrible gale, in which the *Spartan* had shipped tremendous seas. One had swept the decks, penetrating below, and filled the

saloon with a great volume of water, sealing the fate of poor Hand, his wife and infant child, who must have been soon drowned. As soon as it could be effected, Graves was lowered by a rope through the skylight to give help, and he actually got hold of Hand, but the surge of the water to and fro carried the unfortunate man out of reach. After many vain efforts it was necessary to withdraw Graves, whose life was in great jeopardy.

By-and-by, when the storm abated, and the ship lay water-logged on the swell, the water from the saloon was drained through the ports. It was then possible to go below, and the bodies were found, but in the most horribly mangled, shattered condition. Every bone was broken, and poor Hand's head had been torn completely off. After this help came, just when the ill-fated steamer was on the point of foundering, and Graves and the survivors of the crew were taken off and brought to Halifax. This was the news I heard at Antigonish, to my great grief, for Hand had been my captain in the old days at Belfast, and we were very intimate friends. Mrs. Hand was still in the first or second year of married life, a pretty, fair, girlish creature, whose bright days were ended all too soon.

When at length I reached Halifax, my friend the Chief Staff Officer again came to my help. Sir Hastings Doyle was for sending me on without delay to rejoin my regiment, which by this time had been transferred to Canada, and was now stationed in London, Ontario. I obtained leave, however, to remain in Halifax for a week or two, 'in the hope that further instructions might arrive from the Horse Guards, and, sure enough, formal permission for my return was received by next mail. Accordingly I made the homeward voyage by the next Cunard steamer, the s.s. *Arabia*, and as we shaped our course north-eastwards, pointing for the fog banks of Newfoundland, I could not but chuckle a little to think of my good friends of the *Adriatic* still ice-bound in Sydney Harbour. When I landed several weeks had elapsed since the shipwreck of the *Spartan*, long enough for the appearance of the *Gazette*, which, as I thought then, was to make or mar me. The moment I got on shore I



turned my steps to a newsagent's, and anxiously asked for a file of the *Times*, and on getting it I nervously turned over the leaves in search of the eventful record. Hurrah! there it was under date—"Lieutenant A. G. F. Griffiths to be Captain, in succession to Captain C. C. Hand, drowned at sea." I learnt soon afterwards that when the catastrophe was first reported my good old father had travelled straight to London, and sought an interview with the Military Secretary, the redoubtable General Forster, whose name was a terror to the past generation of soldiers, of which I am one of the few surviving. My father, who had served with Forster, was received with great courtesy and kindness by him, and he assured him that I was certain of the step. "Of course he will be promoted, it is his right," and to that he added some kind and encouraging expressions that it was a pleasure to help on a young officer who had tried to help himself, as my record showed.

I did not get back to Sandhurst till late in the spring, and had a long leeway to make up. Our course included the preparation of schemes of defence of ground selected for us, the throwing up of field works, their armament and occupation, the critical examination and description of past campaigns, embodying the facts and opinions of the professor of military history (Colonel Hamley), and I had to deal with these as best I could without having heard the lectures or advice given, and take my chance of the "marks" I might get, but which I could not forego in view of the grand total necessary for a "pass." I had to catch up the higher mathematics, to which my class had been advanced, and as I had taken up Italian as an extra subject, it was essential to acquire enough knowledge of it to make it pay. This was one of the devices to gain "marks"; half the total was sufficient to count, and a smattering of the language would secure it until the system was changed. One of our number chose half a dozen languages; besides French and German, which he knew well, he "scored" in Italian, Spanish, Turkish, and modern Greek, but would have been troubled to make himself understood in any of them a year after the examination.

For my own part, I was fairly well satisfied with the results achieved by pretty close study through this the summer vacation, and strenuous hard work at the College. Happily I was able to hold my own, and although I may have lost a place or two on the list, I came through the final tests with flying colours. One of those who beat me was George Colley, the ill-fated Sir George whose name will ever be associated with the sad failure at Majuba, which went so near to being classed with the greatest feats in war. Colley was a head and shoulders above us all. He elected to go out in one year, and entered our batch when we were in the second, and still headed our list at the end. His was a powerful mind, he had an extraordinary facility in acquiring facts, in setting them forth and reasoning from them. I well remember, as regards myself, how he showed his superiority by utilising the note-books I lent him to make up for the lectures he had never heard in military administration, and to such good purpose that he obtained nearly twice the number of marks I did in the subject.

Then, as now, a part of the Staff College course was to familiarise successful graduates with other arms than their own. As an Infantry officer I was attached to Artillery and Cavalry, and early the following year I spent six months at Woolwich, and became a passable gunner, so far as was possible in the time. Having been initiated into the mysteries of the "Repository" work, the haulage and handling of heavy guns, the use of "shears" and "gyrs,"<sup>lw</sup> the tying of knots and so forth, we were permitted to cross the threshold of science, and passed through the earlier phases of the "Artillery Advanced Class." We spent many long hours at the arsenal, and were shown all the processes of manufacturing ordnance, ammunition, projectiles, fuzes, and gun carriages. We learnt the properties of gunpowder, and only missed those of high explosives because they had not yet been invented. We were drilled as horse gunners, attached first to a field battery, and then to horse artillery, and became expert in ordinary movements, without, however, gaining much insight into the best practical methods of taking up positions or occupying broken ground, for Wool-



wich manœuvres were strictly limited to the narrow space afforded by the Common, and there was no attempt at instruction on the tactics of the three arms.

It was for me a period of privation and probation. The first, because my small means forbade me to indulge largely in the temptations of "town," now for the first time lying close at hand. Everyone who could afford it, and some who could not, went to London almost every day of the week, if off duty. It was the time of high season, and few were so friendless as to lack invitations to the many social festivities; often enough, when carried late into the night, the ballgoers or revellers drove down by road, and their hansoms might be seen entering the barrack gate when the sun was already risen. I missed much of this, but I was, perhaps, better for the enforced deprivation. I had no club at that time, and when I visited London in sheer hunger for some change of scene, I spent long hours in roaming the streets and gaining that intimate knowledge of its topography that would qualify me, if I wished, for the grant of a cabman's licence.

August found me at the Curragh doing duty with the 10th Hussars. There were three of us, Colley, Nolan, and myself, and we were warmly welcomed and made much of by this distinguished regiment, then commanded by one of the most promising officers in the service. A high future might safely have been foretold for Colonel Valentine Baker, whom I remember as a quiet-mannered, rather silent man, who spoke in a soft persuasive voice when he spoke at all. He had a dark, heavy face, a well-knit figure, was a fine horseman, and looked well at the head of his regiment. His soldierly qualities, his gifts of leadership were fully proved later on under another flag, when the disastrous change in his fortunes had closed his career in the British Army, and led him to offer his sword to the Turks. History does not contain a finer or more masterly retreat than Baker's on the Schipka Pass, and he was undoubtedly a great loss to our service. In my time at the Curragh he had brought the 10th to a state of high perfection. It was especially famous for rapidity of manœuvre;

every movement was carried out at a gallop, and the 10th always out-distanced other regiments in the Curragh Brigade. Baker was encouraged in this by the old Duke, who always desired them to "work quickly." "Never mind your horses," he would say, "you can 'cast' them afterwards." Baker was well supported by his officers, all of them men of good social position, who were willing to work hard at their profession, although they enjoyed life to the full. They were sportsmen who hunted and shot, and flirted and danced, for the old reproach of the days of Beau Brummel, when the regiment was greatly favoured by its royal Colonel, the Prince of Wales (George IV.), "The 10th don't dance," had long since been removed. Their loyalty to their chief and their soldierlike spirit were well displayed on one occasion. Baker had been sent to Austria to study a new form of cavalry drill, and when he returned to practise it in his regiment (it was the movement by fours instead of threes, since adopted), all officers on leave rejoined voluntarily to give the system a fair trial. "Leave" was a great institution in the 10th, and my experience of the way it was granted led me to differentiate between "first" and "second" leave, by saying that at first leave in October half the officers started, and at the second, in January, no one came back, but the other half went away. So liberal was the interpretation put on leave that on hunting days not an officer was in barracks but the orderly officers, and I have seen official papers signed by "X., Cornet Commanding 10th Hussars."

But no one took advantage of this liberty. It was a sacred rule that if recall became suddenly necessary a man must make his way back to headquarters at all costs, by hook or by crook, by posting or special train, anyhow. On one occasion a "10th" officer ran away with an engine and the train behind. Captain Hartopp, universally known in his time as Chicken Hartopp, had been staying with Mr. Watson, the Master of the Meath Hounds, and they were returning one Sunday evening from Kerry to Mallow Junction on their way back to the Curragh Camp. There were no other passengers by the train, and Hartopp, having



learnt to drive an engine for fun, as he learnt and did most things, got up with the driver just to keep his hand in. Somewhere on the road the engine-driver got down, and with the guard, left the train; whereupon Hartopp put on full steam and bolted off at express speed. So rapid was his progress that he brought his train to Mallow Junction an hour and a half before its time. Then he backed his engine, and returned to where he had left the driver, and found him in an abject condition, crying like a child over the loss of his train. No doubt he was fully indemnified for his anxieties, and the incident happily ended.

Chicken Hartopp is remembered and regretted by all who knew him as one of the finest of soldiers and most gallant of men. He had many and varied accomplishments; was an excellent linguist, had read much, possessed strong military aptitudes, and he would have proved himself a dashing and most brilliant soldier had but opportunity been vouchsafed to him on active service. In all field sports he was unrivalled; a beautiful coachman, he was seen to the best advantage on the box of a coach; a splendid shot; and although a heavy weight from the first, he rode as straight as a bird, and was always in the first flight with hounds or first past the winning post. His gaiety, his inexhaustible fund of humour, generally of a very practical kind, made him the life and soul of the mess, and led him into innumerable freaks.

We had many instructive field days on the Curragh, where we attached officers were generally sent as "gallopers" to the Brigadier. Our shakos and red coats (Colley's and mine) were a note of false colour in the Hussar line of dark blue with busbies and plumes. The Brigadier was an excellent cavalry officer in his way, but it was his misfortune to have seen no active service. On one occasion he found serious fault with the execution of some manœuvres by that famous old regiment the 9th Lancers, and rode up inflicting sharp reproof, in very strong language, upon its Colonel, Drysdale, a grand old veteran, who lived to a very green old age, and only joined the majority a year or two ago. Colonel Drysdale rode out, and taking

up a position in front of the Brigadier-General, said, "I have been so many years in Her Majesty's service, I have commanded this regiment for so many years, I have been in action with it so many times, I have been mentioned in despatches so many times, I have gained so many medals and decorations, and I am so many years of age, but I have never been so spoken to in all my life." Then he again saluted and resumed his place at the head of the regiment. The General made no reply, and took no notice of this marked act of insubordination, but I have reason to know that he was cut to the quick by the rebuke, and that he afterwards was very moderate in the language he used.

Many descendants of the army that "swore in Flanders" long survived, especially in high command. It was the fashion to find fault intemperately, and I am reminded of an incident not unlike the foregoing in which my own father was concerned. He was quartered with the 25th K.O.B. in Bangalore under a gallant but quick-tempered Peninsula General, Sir John Aitchison, who was in chief command. My father as senior Major was temporarily at the head of his regiment. Although he was a first-class drill he incurred the displeasure of the General, who vented his dissatisfaction with more heat than my father could stand, and after saluting he sheathed his sword and rode off the field. Here again the insubordination was marked and indefensible. It might have cost my father his commission, more especially as it did not end there. My father in riding off the field told the General that he had a black coat at home, and that he should hear from him as from one private gentleman to another. The days of duels were over, but my father had been "out" very often in his time and he held to the last that duelling maintained the highest standard of personal conduct, that it afforded the most wholesome correction to what has since been called "ragging," and which only came into being with the abolition of "affairs of honour." My father did, as a matter of fact, "send a friend" to the General commanding, a preposterous proceeding as we may think it nowadays; although it is on record that Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington,



immediately after Waterloo, at the very zenith of his fame, expressed his readiness to "meet" Captain Gronow in Paris. Sir John Aitchison behaved extremely well, and instead of standing on his rank, or taking advantage of my father's really unjustifiable conduct, apologised for his conduct, and they became fast friends. I had these facts from the old General himself one night at his own dining-table, where he welcomed me, with my father, at the time I obtained my first commission.

Discipline is a fine thing, but it is not desirable always to hold men to strict account for breaches of it. An amusing instance of this occurred at Newbridge when we were stationed there with the 10th Hussars. Quarters could not be found in the barracks, and Colley and I were lodged in an empty private house at the village, where we arranged our few sticks of furniture, and a couple of Hussars were allotted to us as servants. On the very first night, returning from mess, we found the door barred against us, and it was utterly impossible to rouse the somnolent troopers to let us in. At last, after much hammering and ringing in vain, Colley suggested that we should break a pane or two of glass and get in at the window. Being the smaller I was sent in first, to be at once seized in the arms of one servant while the other belaboured me fiercely while I was thus tightly held. Colley had followed me in through the window, but he was quite incapable, or, worse, quite indisposed to render me any assistance, for the affair appealed so strongly to his sense of humour that he was speechless with laughter. At last our men made out that we were in uniform and recognised their grievous mistake, and apologised ruefully, doubtful what fate would overtake them. They had been guilty of striking a superior officer, but I was not "in the execution of my duty," and it was hardly a case in which I could invoke the penalties of the articles of war, even if so inclined, as I certainly was not.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## GIBRALTAR.

Across the Atlantic Once More—Town Major of London, Canada West—Appointed Brigade Major—To Gibraltar—Halcyon Days—Entertaining Foreign Guests—A French Officer who Misconstrued an Idiom—Quarrel between an Englishman and a German—Colonel Fitch—Races—Ways and Means—"Sacc"—Gambling—In-and-Out Running—Interesting People—H.R.H. Prince Alfred and H.M.S. *Raccoon*—A Visit to Morocco—Ceuta and its Convict Prison—Prince Alfred and the Boatswain of the *Merrimac*—In Pursuit of the Prince.

I was once more bound to cross the Atlantic, *en route* to rejoin my regiment, now in London, Canada West. By some shuffle of the cards my embarkation was postponed from one week to another, and very much to my advantage, for the steamer in which I was first given passage was cast away and sunk in the harbour of Portland, State of Maine, and on arrival after a prosperous passage, we saw only the mast of the ill-fated ship sticking up above water. I travelled on without pause through the States, for the news of my being aboard the lost ship had preceded me, and I was supposed to have been drowned. The first person to meet me was Graves, whom I had cut out of the promotion *vice* Hand, and who had thought he had got the best of me at last, and there was much laughter over his disappointment.

The good people who had founded this London in the far west had been at great pains to adopt the nomenclature of its rival, the Imperial metropolis, which, to distinguish it from its namesake in the province of Ontario, was generally known as London "G.B." This newer city was also built upon a river Thames, it owned a Blackfriars and a Battersea Bridge, a parish church christened St. Paul's, there was a Grosvenor Square, hedged in by the roots of primeval trees, part of our regiment was located in a disused exhibition building still known as the Crystal Palace, and the similarity



was preserved in many other ways. My Staff College certificate now gained me my first appointment on the general staff, and I became Town Major of London, a more grandiose title than the position deserved. I had a good friend and old Staff College comrade, T. S. Hall, the Brigade Major at Toronto, who threw other staff work in my way. I always officiated as Deputy Judge Advocate on General Courts-Martial, and was put in command of the local volunteer battalion when it attended any review.

I had not long to wait for a better billet. My friend General Forster, the military secretary, had not forgotten me, and in June, 1864, I received an order to proceed forthwith to Gibraltar on appointment as Brigade Major to the Infantry Brigade.

Gibraltar! The mere name stirs my pulses and warms my heart like generous wine, it renews my vanished youth, revives pleasant memories fast fading away. At Gibraltar I really began life, did important and very varied work, mixed with persons of consequence, and made many excellent friends. I served under men of mark, was favoured by indulgent superiors who accorded kindly approval of my efforts, was ever strenuous, unstinting and well intentioned. I was thrown with comrades of my own rank and age, who have grown old with me, have stood by me constantly in the battle of life; some have gained distinction, well-deserved, some, like myself, have made no great mark, but all have proved loyal, staunch friends to the last. At Gibraltar I had all the world before me. I thought the ball was at my feet; I had many good chances which I might have made much more of. I was called to many functions, found many opportunities, some higher than my status warranted, and others of infinite variety, giving me breadth and experience, practical insight into many different subjects, and no little smattering of a multifarious knowledge.

I have commented already upon the way of life in the British garrisons abroad, contrasting it with the descriptions given by certain foreign writers of garrison society in their own countries. I tried to show on a previous page that

there were no such scandals rife in Halifax when I served there, and I may confidently say that it was the same at Gibraltar. I will not pretend that the general tone of the society was of a very high level, but it was not worse than elsewhere in any average or similar town in the Empire. Life followed much the same course with the peculiar conditions of a fortress locked up from sun down to day dawn, and though the narrow limits of the Rock imposed certain restrictions, we were at the same time drawn by them into closer intimacy than prevails in larger places. We took our pleasures as best we could. Professional cares sat lightly upon the greater number who were satisfied with the discharge of routine duties, the juniors mounting guard constantly, and all alike attending mechanical drill day after day or being turned out for a big parade on the north front.

For myself, I had plenty to do, as a Staff Officer and Brigade Major associated with five infantry regiments, and worked hard to acquire skill in their movements and manœuvres in the field, such as it was. I had but little chance of handling troops on broken ground, but I was no worse off than other staff officers for practice of this kind, which was not really afforded anywhere in those days. To deal promptly with office work, examine voluminous "returns" sent in monthly by the various units, to hold the Commanding Officers to a strict observance of their regulations, to draft letters for my General and accompany him on his bi-annual inspections of the regiments, to administer military law and keep courts-martial straight, made up the sum total of the Brigade Major's duties. As time passed I came to be more trusted. The General allowed me to advise and suggest plans for making the field days something more than mere "marches past," and the execution of stiff evolutions of a few battalions in a pinched-up space, a business much like piecing out a Chinese puzzle. Now and again we made pretence of defending the fortress, and sent the troops to their stations along the Line Wall and upon the upper roads, thus foreshadowing the larger operations now regularly practised in combination with the fleet.

Gibraltar was at that time, and for all I know still is,



a very "horsey" place, if I may use the expression. Every subaltern almost owned a nag, more ambitious people had a stable full of hacks, advanced on occasion to the rank of hunters and racehorses. There were numbers of sportsmen and turfites on the Rock, and the cult of horseflesh was a very dominant passion. We had our own pack of hounds, the direct descendants of the famous pack, the "Peer's" pack, which Wellington hunted in the Peninsula, and followed always in the dress of the Hampshire hunt, a pale blue coat with a black cape. The Calpe Hunt, as it was called, was always liberally treated by friends at home, and year after year we got ample drafts of hounds from England. Our M.F.H. was always an officer of the garrison, and he was assisted by amateur whips, but there was, of course, a professional huntsman with his men, and the sport shown was generally good. The fields were always large, it was a point of honour for everyone to turn out, from the Governor and the swells who showed in unexceptionable pink, to the last joined subaltern in a shooting coat and gaiters, who galloped the very tail off his mount, and was often enough in the first flight, while more pretentious persons shied at the breakneck slopes of the rugged country we had often to cross.

There was not seldom a large attendance at the meet; when a foreign warship was in port it sent its quota of naval officers, and I remember on one occasion when every hack in the place was requisitioned by a number of Hungarian cavalry officers who were passing through Gibraltar *en route* to serve the Emperor Maximilian. Poor fellows! A year or two later only a small remnant returned on their homeward voyage, as a large balance had shared their luckless sovereign's fate. We made great friends with them on their first visit. They were instinct with soldierly camaraderie, fine, gallant men, mostly members of high families, and all of course rode well. One of them, a Metternich, wrote an account afterwards in a sporting Viennese paper, in which he expressed his astonishment at the excellent horsemanship of the English officers, "who, strange to say, all belonged to the infantry." Our Hungarian friends had had very little

experience of chasing the fox, and one of them roused the ire of Turner, our huntsman, for suddenly appearing in the wrong place, when he was loudly abused as "a painted French foreigner" (he was in uniform) for heading the fox.

Our foreign guests were often in trouble for contravening the rules. One of the great troubles of the Hunt was the heavy indemnities claimed by the Spanish farmers for damage to crops. I remember a great scene one day when the captain of a French man-of-war rode straight through a field of young corn, and was very indignant on being checked by the M.F.H. He was generally a very amiable man, and we all liked this Frenchman who bore an historic English name. But he was imperfectly acquainted with our language, and his ignorance nearly involved some of us in a serious quarrel. Late one night, at a Convent ball, he was on the point of hurrying away to regain his ship in the bay before the gates of the New Mole closed. "Why should you go?" asked a friend with hospitable intent. "I will give you a shake down." The expression was new to him, and he took it literally. "You will shake me down?" he cried, blazing with fierce anger. "Mon Dieu, you shall not shake me down, you shall not touch me. *Ventre Saint Gris!* I will send for my witnesses, you shall meet me on the ground, we will cross swords." He was only pacified with much difficulty, and it was long before he could be made to understand that it was a kindly invitation, and not an insult that had been offered him.

This was not the only case in which a mistake in language all but led to the spilling of blood. A few years later I was present at a nasty *fracas* at a *table d'hôte* in Madrid. A dispute as to the distinctive meaning of the two words *farceur* and *menteur* arose between an Englishman and a German. The latter, to prove his view, proceeded to translate a Spanish proverb into French, and the Englishman jeered at him, calling him *très bête* to attempt to use two languages which he only half understood, to which the German retorted, "If you say I am *très-bête* I call you *très arrogant*." Thereupon to clinch the argument the Englishman threw a glass of wine into the German's face. Both



sprang to their feet and went for each other, but were promptly parted by a Spanish general who sat close by. Cards were immediately exchanged, and the general told the German that he must take serious notice of the insult offered to him and call the other out. Next morning the Englishman called on me and asked me to be his second in the duel that seemed inevitable. I explained that I could only do so at the risk of forfeiting my commission, for the Queen's regulations were very plain in forbidding any officers to be mixed up in such matters; but I could not leave a fellow-countryman altogether in the lurch, and I took him to a friend of mine, a rather strange character who will be remembered by old residents in Madrid, Colonel Fitch.

We are told by Mr. G. A. Storey, A.R.A., in his "Sketches from Memory," that Colonel Fitch, who was a relative of his, had served in the seven years' civil war between Spain and Portugal, and had done much fighting both at St. Sebastian and in Madrid. "He showed me," says Storey, when on a visit to Spain, "several marks on the walls and tiles of Madrid which were made by shots from cannon which he had directed, one especially on a large old tree near the Prado which he called Fitch's mark." He seems to have dabbled in political plots also, for another vague story of his, told us one night at the theatre, referred to the conspiracy to carry off the then young Queen Isabella from the very box in which we were sitting. Colonel Fitch was instrumental in obtaining a grant of land to form a British cemetery a mile outside the capital. Till then Protestants who died in Spain were denied decent burial as heretics doomed to hell fire. Fitch was a very popular and useful person in Madrid, and often a source of great amusement. His account of the settlement of the duel, in which he was greatly helped by the principals themselves, who had no very keen desire to fight, became a stock story in Madrid, in which the red drawing-room in the club where the interviews took place, and the Café Europeo where the feud was quenched in fluid, played a prominent part.

Gibraltar was an expensive station. There was much

going on, entertainments, dances, dinners, gaiety of all kinds. The subscriptions were numerous and made severe calls on narrow purses, and as a general rule there is much truth in the old French distich, "*Le militaire n'est pas riche, chacun sait ça.*" I know for my own part that but for a fortunate windfall when I was sent into Spain, of which more directly, I should have found it extremely difficult to make both ends meet.

I fancy that impecuniosity besets our officers as much now as of old, and it is painfully true that while there has been no appreciable increase of pay since the reign of Queen Anne, the purchasing power of money has steadily decreased, so that officers are probably more hard up than ever. It is nothing new for them to outrun the constable, and I can call to mind many old traditions of their shifts and devices to escape their creditors. In the days when bailiffs were permitted to make arrests a couple of them closely besieged the barrack occupied by a regiment on the point of embarking for foreign service. They were on the watch for an officer against whom they had a writ and would have taken him at the head of his company, but he was not to be seen. The fact was he had put on a soldier's uniform and passed out with the band, playing the big drum. There was a somewhat similar legend preserved in my old regiment, of a bailiff who penetrated the barrack square when the regiment, also on the point of moving off to embark for the Crimea, was on parade. The venturesome man served his writ, but as he did so two sergeants stepped out and identified him as a deserter from the regiment. He protested, but the Colonel ruled that there was no time to investigate, and as the sergeants were prepared to swear to their man, the Commanding Officer decided that he should be taken on board, where there would be leisure to look into the facts. In the end the bailiff was held to serve, but chiefly because he elected to do so, having become enamoured of a soldier's life under the strong temptation of accompanying the regiment to the war.

I have heard of still more desperate devices to escape arrest. One man allowed himself to be headed up in a



cask until the transport got to sea. A second was stowed away in the hold, and a third—I can vouch for this story—actually died and was buried; at least a coffin was carried out from his quarters and carried to the grave with military honours, but its supposed occupant had gone down country and sailed for England. I knew this officer, who was afterwards a captain in my own regiment.

There were two regular race meetings at Gibraltar, spring and autumn, and a steeplechase meeting, all of which were well supported and largely attended. Racing was perhaps carried too far. So long as owners matched their hacks and chargers, trained them themselves, and ran them for the stakes subscribed, it was a comparatively harmless amusement which helped to pass the time of exile pleasantly. But racing became too much of a business. Settling day was a serious matter, although it was made as easy as possible through the good offices of Saccone.

This is now the honoured, and rightly honoured, name of a famous firm doing a large business as wine merchants with regiments and King's ships—but how much more was the first who bore it in Gibraltar esteemed, appreciated, feared! The first "Sacc" some thirty years ago had come to be the universal provider of cash, the general relieving officer of the garrison. Everyone banked with Saccone, although the banking was very much of the kind meant by the old Duke of York (Frederick) when proposing the health of Messrs. Cox and Greenwood:—"My bankers—no, not exactly that, for as a matter of fact, I am theirs. I have more of their money than they have of mine." Most of the officers serving at "Gib." in those days had some of "Sacc's" money, at least for a time. There was never any difficulty in getting an advance from "Sacc," and really on perfectly fair and reasonable terms. It has always been affirmed that he never made any serious losses through this willingness to let accounts be overdrawn, but one can, of course, have no certainty on this point. That he was distinctly obliging, and to an extent that showed extraordinary confidence, was an undoubted fact. What passed between those who were deep in his

books and "Sacc's devil," a sharp visaged, pertinacious employé of his who had an unpleasant way of calling on his customers continually, was never rightly divulged. When this dreaded emissary won past the gate orderlies, and was seen approaching the officers' quarters there was no safety but in immediate flight. Ponies were saddled, and a rush made for Spain by another exit from the barrack yard. It was, of course, only postponing the inevitable hour, with the prospect of a still more unpleasant interview with paterfamilias in the end. I can call to mind one youngster who took home so heavy a reckoning that his illustrious father brought the subject of racing and betting at "Gib." before the authorities at the Horse Guards.

No doubt the spirit of gambling was very rife on the Rock in those days, and it must have been encouraged by the ease with which money could be borrowed. Very big books were made on the various events—far too large for an ordinary garrison town. The Indian system of lotteries was in force; horses were drawn, then put up to auction and knocked down to the highest bidder, the favourite often fetching as much as two or three hundred pounds. With this assistance, large odds could be given and taken (I can remember one bet of a hundred pounds to a potato, in which the potato man won); hence the heavy obligations incurred after every meeting, and the need to apply to the great financial agent. Racing had thus developed—perhaps degenerated is the proper word—into far more than the original matching together of the chargers and ponies that officers rode on parade or hunted to hounds. Considerable enterprise was shown in securing cracks, and men went long distances in search of them. There was one expedition to Alexandria in search of a certain Arab in Ismail's stable, whose fame for speed had travelled as far as "Gib." and who did eventually walk off with the Barb Maiden. Racing was the chief topic of conversation in those days; everyone watched the training, and if possible the trials. These took place *coram publico*, upon the North Front exercising ground, where all the sportsmen of the garrison collected in the early morning to watch the gallops in the intervals of



coffee drinking and flirtation. Privacy was almost out of the question, and one story at least is told of an ingenious device to test performance without overlookers. The owner was a captain, bound in his turn to mount the North Front guard, and spend the night there, locked out when everyone else was locked inside the fortress. When the chance came, his horses and his jockeys were sent down last thing; the first were stabled beside the guard-room, the latter had a shake down within. At dawn dawn the party turned out to make the trial, and, as they devoutly hoped, quite unseen. But somehow the secret had leaked out, and after a gallop a loud "Who-op" from behind a tombstone in the North Front cemetery told the disappointed owner that his artifice had failed.

Some incidents were not so harmless. It is to be feared that the temptation to make a big haul occasionally encouraged more reprehensible practices. In-and-out running was not altogether unknown, and there was one case which had also its comic side. A certain officer was alleged to have roped his mount in front of the whole grand stand, before the Governor, the General, the Stewards, and half the garrison assembled. The joke was thought to be in the silly, bungling way in which the thing was done, and yet the hero of this escapade was greatly surprised when he was called over the coals. A Court of Enquiry sat to take evidence, and in spite of his indignant denial the offence was held to be proved, and he was called upon to resign his commission. Fortunately the general tone of the turf stood too high to be injuriously affected by an affair of this sort. The proceedings were ever controlled by men of honour, officers and gentlemen in the truest sense of the term. One was afterwards Governor, the late Sir Lothian Nicholson, who died on the Rock some years ago; another is the late Military Secretary, General Sir Coleridge Grove, in whom only a few old veterans will recognise the long-headed young ensign who won so much unstinted approval as handicapper at the meetings. He exhibited then that superior intelligence and rare power of collating facts that made his reputation.

Not the least of the attractions of Gibraltar in my time

was that interesting people continually made it a place of passage. I have mentioned the Hungarian lancers, going to Mexico, full of high hopes and returning a shattered band. Marshal Bazaine came through soon afterwards, and we were presented to him at a levée held in the Convent. I had not seen the Marshal since he commanded the Fernch contingent at Kinburn, and found that he had grown stout, short of speech, and abrupt in manner. A few years more and he was to be charged with treachery, tried by Court-Martial, and imprisoned on the Île Saint Marguerite. Prince Napoleon visited the Rock, and I was commissioned to take off the Governor's card of invitation to a banquet, but the Prince would not land.

We had the honour of making the intimate acquaintance of one of the Royal family, Prince Alfred, first as a Lieutenant of H.M.S. *Raccoon*, and afterwards as Duke of Edinburgh in command of H.M.S. *Galatea*. His Royal Highness joined very heartily in all the life of the garrison. He was very fond of the mess of the 78th Highlanders, and loved to dance a reel to the skirling of pipe music, or do a nigger "walk round," then as much in vogue as the "cake walk" of to-day. I was permitted to accompany him on a shooting trip, a couple of days' journey into Morocco, when we halted one night in a mountain caravanserai at Fondak, a second in the town of Tetuan, and the third in the shooting encampment, where I presently left him, and, escorted by a Moorish soldier, made my way to Ceuta, the Spanish convict settlement. This was before the question was raised as to the exchange of Ceuta and Gibraltar, although strong views on the wisdom of the step were held even then by Sir John Hay, our Minister at Tangier. He paid a long visit to Gibraltar one winter, and I had many opportunities of talking with him on the subject, which was attracting some public attention at the time. Sir John pointed out the great material advantages of Ceuta over Gibraltar as a place of arms; he foresaw that with the increased power of modern artillery the Rock must become untenable, while Ceuta with its more extensive territory and its wide sheltered bay could be converted into a stronghold that could defy



attack or investment. These arguments did not find favour at the time, although they were strongly held, and effect could have been given to the exchange without protest from the Powers. The Franco-German war was close at hand, and the French at least soon had their hands too full to interfere. Now the opportunity has gone for ever, and French influence is, with our consent, to be paramount in Morocco. Possibly the price paid, a free hand in Egypt, may be worth this surrender.

Ceuta had a personal interest for me, as my grandfather had been stationed there as General commanding the British troops sent across from Gibraltar to garrison it during the Peninsular War, and I found a bound volume of his official correspondence in the library of the Convent. It was my fate to be detained in Ceuta for some days by heavy weather, and I made diligent but fruitless search through the place for any trace of my grandfather's residence. Ceuta had another attraction for me as a convict prison, the first I had seen, for even then, long before I had the slightest idea that I should be connected so largely with prisons and their management, I was greatly interested in such matters. Ceuta had long been converted into a *presidio* or colonial penitentiary, very much on the lines of our latest form of transportation beyond the seas as seen in Tasmania. The convicts formed a large portion of the population and were an integral part of the life of the place. They were much employed in public works, on buildings and fortifications. They cultivated the soil and followed useful trades, being permitted after a certain term to take service very much on the lines of the Australian "assigned" system, acting as cooks and coachmen, engaged in handicrafts, while the better educated became language masters and even professors in art, science, and philosophy. "No one asked them what they had done," I find it recorded in a contemporary volume, "although everyone knew they had committed thefts, forgeries, perhaps murder. So long as they conducted themselves well in Ceuta they were held good prisoners, and found to be faithful, sober, hard-working, respectful and intelligent." "There was less crime in

Ceuta," says the same authority, "than in any town of its size on the mainland. It is to all intents and purposes a convict city; the convicts walk about like ordinary citizens, no one notices them in the streets or avoids them at any hour of the day or night."

Nevertheless a later observer, who visited Ceuta in 1876, drew a very painful picture of the prison life, which was printed in the *Times*. He found in the central prison, El Hacho, from 800 to 1,000 inmates, clad in wretched rags, living on the bare floors of the wretched sheds they called their homes. "Tottering in and out, devouring and quarrelling like hyænas over their wretched, insufficient fare, they smuggled knives into the fortress and fought and killed one another like wild beasts. No words of mine," he wrote, "can paint the darkness, the filth, the seething corruption of these dens of convicts—dens into which no streak of sunlight, divine or human, ever finds its way, and where nothing is heard or seen but assassins and cruelty on the one hand; misery, starvation, and obscenity on the other."

I saw nothing of this, I confess. Such convicts as were visible in and about the town were orderly enough, and the men who were at large and to be met with on every side were sufficiently clad, although in the prison dress, a coarse dark brown cloth, with rope soled sandals, so commonly seen in Spain. They added somewhat to the picturesqueness of the place, which owned a very mixed population, and as many costumes were to be seen in its streets as in Gibraltar. Moors in their flowing *haiks* came in daily from the country round, bringing produce and buying goods; there were many Spaniards in close-fitting short jackets and skin-tight breeches ending in the conventional leather gaiters with their hanging tassels, and on top of all, the *calañes*, or round, hard, tasselled hat of black velvet. Soldiers, of course, were plentiful, for there was a strong garrison; I found the officers friendly, and they did the honours of the place very hospitably. I felt it my duty to give them a pressing invitation to pay me a visit on the Rock, and a few weeks later was a little taken aback by the



appearance of half a dozen of them or more in my small quarters in Secretary's Lane, all in full uniform, and all very keen to see the sights. Luncheon at the nearest mess, and a walk up the Rock (now very properly a forbidden pleasure) sent them back to Ceuta in high good humour. In those days there was a regular service of sailing boats between Ceuta and Algeciras, and when the storm had abated I myself travelled that way in a *xereque*, the lineal descendant of the *zebecq*, in which Robinson Crusoe escaped from the Moors at Salee, the modern Rabat. To-day a steamer runs between the mainland and Ceuta, which I am told has become a much more important place, with increased defences and greatly improved armament.

Among other ships of war that visited Gibraltar when I was there was one, the *Merrimac* (I think), of the United States Navy, conveying the gallant old Admiral Farragut on a cruise through the Mediterranean. There was a story current that is perhaps worth telling of the boatswain of this ship, who at some previous trip to the Mediterranean had met with H.R.H. Prince Alfred, then a Lieutenant on H.M.S. *Raccoon*. The boatswain boasted that when the Prince came on board the American ship he was always spoken to by him and treated in the most kindly manner. Whenever they met the Prince always shook hands with him, using as a preliminary the cordial invitation, more often heard perhaps in a Yankee sailor's than in a Royal Prince's mouth, "Put it right thar." The story got about, and was continually quoted as a good joke against the boatswain. It so happened that history repeated itself and again the boatswain was serving upon a United States ship in the Mediterranean, and so was the Prince, by this time Duke of Edinburgh. The two ships were lying in Gibraltar Bay, and some wag told His Royal Highness of the boatswain's pretensions. The Duke determined to get a laugh out of it, and when he was paying a visit to the American ship he asked that the boatswain might be sent for. "Hullo, my friend," he remarked, "I am glad to see you again. Put it right thar," whereupon the boatswain timidly, but with a very gratified look on his face, shook hands; then turning to

the captain, whom he suspected of having laid a trap for him, said, "And yew thought I was lying!"

I can remember how the Prince led me a fine dance once at Gibraltar. It was a hunting day, but, being anxious to save a horse for next day's parade, I did not go out with the hounds. Prince Alfred had breakfasted with some of us and had started for the meet, when a Spanish telegraph messenger rode in from San Roque with a telegram for His Royal Highness (there was no direct cable with Gibraltar at that time). Just as it was handed to me the Governor of the Fortress, Sir Richard Airey, rode by, also bound for the meet, and I explained what had happened, hoping, perhaps, that he would take the telegram on to the Prince, but Sir Richard only said, without giving it a second thought, "Get on your horse and bring it along." By the time I had attended to some necessary duties, changed, mounted and ridden off, the Prince had had nearly an hour's start. The meet was at the Queen of Spain's Chair, and before I reached the ground the hounds had thrown off, found a fox, and run it towards the Eastern Beach. I hurried after them, pressing on by directions from the men who had been distanced or thrown out, but I did not come up with the field before I had covered half a dozen miles. It had been a sharp burst, possibly after a bagman or a red herring laid for the Prince's especial benefit, but it could not have amused him greatly, for when I got up I heard that he had gone back some time before to San Roque to lunch.

Turning my horse's head, I retraced my steps—a pretty long journey—to the town, and rode straight to McCrae's Hotel. "Prince Alfred?" "Oh, yes; he lunched here, but he's gone." "Which way?" "Don't know for certain, to the Cork Wood or back to the Rock." The latter I found was the case, so once more I commenced my wildgoose chase with a thoroughly tired horse, and very much disgusted at my fruitless mission. All the way back I heard of the Prince, always just ahead, always beyond my reach. At the Lines they said he had just passed through; at the North Front Guard he had stopped for a talk; he crossed the Landport drawbridge and



entered the town not many minutes before me. But he paid many visits in the town. I traced him from mess to mess, and from one private house to another, till at length I was told he had gone back to his ship, H.M.S. *Raccoon*. At last I had run him down, so sending my horse to the stable, I hailed an outside car and was driven to the New Mole. There I found him in his cabin, and handed over the telegram with which I had been pursuing him for nearly a dozen hours. He opened it, read it, frowned and threw it on the floor. "I had much rather you hadn't brought it at all," was all the acknowledgment I got. For the message was from the Queen and contained news of the engagement of a member of the Royal family—who it was I forbear to say. It is only fair to add that afterwards he thanked me very cordially for the trouble I had taken, though he made a great joke of it and often referred to it in after years. I had to borrow a horse for the parade next day.

## CHAPTER IX.

GIBRALTAR (*continued*).

Intimacy with Sir Richard (afterwards Lord) Airey—Incidents Illustrating his Character—His Insight—Might-have Beens—Airey's Career—A Midnight Picnic on the Rock—Rides into Spain—A Meeting with Regnault the Painter—My Companions—The *Gibraltar Chronicle*: My Introduction to Journalism.

ON looking back on my Gibraltar days, I must count as the highest advantage that came to me the intimacy I was privileged to enjoy with Sir Richard Airey, afterwards Lord Airey. He kept me at a distance at first, and I resented what I thought was his stand-offish and imperious manner. I was not thrown with him much, for my duties were not with the Headquarters' Staff but with the Infantry Brigade and its own General, the second in command. Once when the Town Major fell sick I discharged his functions, and I seem to have offended the Governor by a rather flippant letter I drafted to answer a complaint raised about the state of the guard-rooms. They were said to be infested with vermin, a charge I could not deny, but I urged that while certain unpleasant insects were plentiful enough, "scorpions, except the two-legged kind, were comparatively rare." Probably most people knew that "scorpion" is the slang epithet for natives on the Rock. On a second occasion I had a serious difference with his Excellency. Again I was acting as Town Major, and I had received express instructions from the Governor that a certain funeral procession should follow the shortest route to the North Front burial ground. The Town Major, although on the sick list, saw fit to upset the orders I had given, not knowing they had come direct from the General, and when the head of the procession reached the Casemate barrack square it took the wrong road. Sir Richard, who was following, rode up to me

and attacked me fiercely for disobeying his instructions. "The Town Major did it, sir, not I," I replied hotly. "How dare you tell me so? The Town Major is on the sick list." "The Town Major is not on the sick list, sir," I retorted, and at that moment my good angel arranged that Morgan (Town Major) should drive past us in a pony cart, desiring, no doubt, to rejoice in the way he had improved my arrangements. He was a little surprised, therefore, when the General turned to him and summarily ordered him back to his quarters.

From that day forth Sir Richard became my very good friend. Our pleasant relations were, I think, increased by two remarks of mine, which he accepted very cordially. One of his small failings was to spell indifferently, and he sometimes expressed regret at the mistakes he made. I ventured to suggest that it was merely a mechanical error, and that while any fool could spell only a person of character would dare to strike out a line for himself. The other failing, venial enough in a man who had slaved hard all his life, was a tendency to idle away his time, or at least to prefer outdoor exercise (he was an indefatigable sportsman) to sticking to his desk. I greatly pleased him once by reminding him that it was easy enough to work oneself, but it took a good man to make others work and get the best out of them.

To those who relieved him of details and did their best to keep the coach running he was most grateful and considerate. He often said, "Do not be afraid to act. In any emergency take a direct line and don't hesitate. I promise to support you so long as I am satisfied you were not shilly-shallying and honestly acted according to your lights and opinions." I had an opportunity of rendering him a service to which I may be permitted to refer in this place. One hot summer, when he had made up his mind to go home on leave, his application was refused with a very pointed reminder that his correspondence with the authorities in Downing Street and Pall Mall was very much in arrears, and that until he cleared it off he could not be spared from his command. I was at that time acting as Assistant Adjutant-General, or local chief of the staff, and one morn-



ing when I went to take his orders he pointed to a great pile of papers on a table in a corner of his room. "I want you to take those in hand," he said. "They've got to be dealt with and answered before I can be allowed leave." Of course I expressed my readiness to help, and carried off the lot to my own office, where, after examination, I was able to reduce their number considerably, for many were on the same subject with the same refrain, "Referring to my previous letter of the —th, still unanswered," and so on, and so on. By sorting and classifying I still further lessened the heap, and then I applied myself vigorously to each in turn, preparing a *précis*, making diligent search for the information on which to base replies, and then submitted the result to the Chief.

I was now presented with a remarkable phase in Lord Airey's character, well known, as I found afterwards, to all who had been brought in contact with him. He had the gift of prompt unerring insight, and could go straight, almost by intuition, to the very heart and kernel of a matter, putting aside all verbiage, all minor and unimportant details, and striking at the essential point. I have been repeatedly told this by the higher staff, Lord Wolseley, Sir George Greaves, and others who were greatly impressed by the faculty so constantly displayed by him when he returned later to the Horse Guards as Adjutant-General to the Forces. I need hardly point out how the exercise of it helped me in the discharge of my difficult, and, for a very young man, somewhat onerous task. Sir Richard not only readily and intuitively untied knots and solved problems, but he brought a long and wide experience to bear upon the best form of couching an answer. He knew exactly who had written a particular letter, not the signature merely, but the clerk in the Department at home who had prepared it and who had infused his spirit into it. Some of my drafts hugely delighted him. "My dear fellow, you mustn't say *that*; it would draw the Duke (Cambridge) out of his boots when he read it"; or, "You're quite wrong there, quite missed the point." Never had a tyro such a fine lesson in staff business from a past master in the craft, and it was



with no small pride that I found the General on the whole fully approved of my conduct. When at length all obstacles to his departure were removed, and he stood upon the deck of the homeward-bound P. & O., he publicly thanked me in the presence of the heads of the departments who had come to see him off, and was good enough to say that but for me he could not have gone home.

Looking back upon those days, I am moved to digress for a moment and wander into the "might-have-beens." It is curious to conjecture what might have happened to me personally, and many more, had coming events been advanced somewhat in point of time. All this was in the years '67 to '70, just before the star of Wolseley rose above the horizon, and at that date undoubtedly the most prominent British soldier was Sir Richard Airey. Had affairs in Egypt developed then, as they did later, into Arabi's war, undoubtedly the command of the expeditionary forces would have been given to Sir Richard Airey, and no less certainly, as actually happened indeed, a Brigade would have been sent from the Mediterranean. I might have counted then upon a good post on the staff; and the results I might have achieved would have depended on myself alone. Egypt in '83 was the stepping stone to advancement for many of my good friends. To Sir Coleridge Grove, for instance, who went steadily forward from that his first experience of war; to Sir Henry Hildyard also, who was Brigade Major to the Brigade from the Mediterranean; to Sir Baker Russell, who gained distinction as a brilliant cavalry leader. Sir Evelyn Wood added there to his already numerous laurels; Sir Neville Lyttelton, now first member of the Army Council, was on the personal staff in Egypt; and H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught as a Divisional Commander received his baptism of fire at Tel-el-Kebir. Such guesses may be unprofitable, but I cannot but believe that my whole career might have been changed had the opportunities come that were wanting in that piping time of peace, and saved me from the serious step I presently took in retiring from the service.

It was like a liberal education to be admitted to close

intimacy with Sir Richard Airey. He talked freely upon so many interesting and important topics, he had seen so much, knew so much, had done so much, that he was always a fascinating companion. He began his soldiering abroad; his father, Sir George, who had served with great distinction under Wellington, would not suffer him to waste his time in idleness while waiting for a commission, and sent him to serve in the army of one of the smaller German states. He presently entered the 31st Regiment, and rose in it rapidly, being quartered with it in Canada as its Colonel at the time of the Papineau rebellion. His father's influence secured him an appointment at the Horse Guards, and he had the good fortune to attract the attention and approval of the great Duke (Wellington), who was then Commander-in-Chief. I remember his telling me a story which is also recorded in Kinglake's *Crimean War*. It was Airey's duty one day to take in a map and explain the operations then in progress in Kaffraria, when he was much complimented by the Duke of Wellington upon his clear exposition of the military situation.

The Duke showed his interest by giving Airey good advice and insisting upon its being followed. An uncle of Airey's, Colonel Talbot, had settled some time back in Canada, where he owned extensive estates, and he proposed that his nephew should join him to help him in their management and eventually inherit them. "You must go, Airey," the Duke said to him, and although it was a terrible wrench, he retired on half pay, intending to break with his military career. He made a good fight with the uncongenial business, but, as he told me, hankered always after his old life at home, and longed to return to the ways of more civilised society. After a day spent in the backwoods or on the farms he made a point of sitting down properly dressed to dinner, very much as we know our isolated Indian officials in the far-off Mofussil make it their punctilious practice.

After a year or two his exile became unbearable, and Colonel Airey returned to his old profession, finding a new place upon the Headquarter Staff as Military Secretary to Lord Hardinge, who had now succeeded the Duke of



Wellington as Commander-in-Chief. He was so employed when the approaching war with Russia led to the preparation of an expeditionary army for the East. When all the arrangements for the staff and commands had been completed, Colonel Airey, who as chief patronage officer was entirely in Lord Hardinge's confidence, put in a request that he might not be forgotten. Lord Hardinge expressed his surprise, and demurred at granting what he considered was a foolish request. "Why, there will be no war. This is only a demonstration. Six months hence the troops will have returned, and if you accompany them you will have given up your place and will be out in the cold." Colonel Airey wisely persisted, as events proved, urging that it was a fixed idea with him, "following his father's advice," to seek employment with troops whenever active service was on the cards, and accordingly he was appointed to a Brigade command, declining at first Lord Raglan's offer of the post of Quartermaster-General, which, however, he accepted later, on the eve of the invasion of the Crimea, *vice* Lord de Ros, who had been invalided.

The rest is recorded in history, ancient history, perhaps, but I heard some very specially interesting things from Airey. From the very first he recognised the shortcomings of our military system, and perceived that "winter troubles" were inevitable. He made representations at a very early date as to the shortness of supplies of all sorts; he bombarded the War Office with requests for camp equipage, forage, transport animals and carriages, without receiving replies, much less responsive action in meeting these essential needs. He was for ever struggling with a burden, the weight of which steadily increased, and which as a matter of fact should have been borne by other shoulders, for the question of supplies was outside the department of the Quartermaster-General. The mistaken notion that he was responsible was taken up by the ignorant public, and brought him into much discredit, quite undeservedly, and very largely in consequence of the violent attacks by Dr. Russell, the famous *Times* correspondent, of whom ever afterwards Sir Richard cherished the liveliest dislike. None



the less did he strive strenuously to support and supplement Lord Raglan when he was so bitterly assailed, and won from him always the most heartfelt thanks and appreciation. Lord Raglan's letters of the period are full of them. He wrote constantly declaring that "Airey is everything to me," "I don't know what I should do without Airey." No doubt he was the most useful and prominent member of the Head-quarter Staff. There was one subject on which Sir Richard Airey would never speak; his lips were sealed about the battle of Balaclava. Yet no one could have known the exact truth better, for the unfortunate Captain Nolan, the bearer of the message to Lord Cardigan ordering him to charge, was on his personal staff as A.D.C.

Lord Airey was the most light-hearted of men, full of spirits and go, who liked to see other people enjoying themselves, and was eager always to take a part in what was going on. I have a lively recollection of one particular party of rather an original kind which was arranged under his auspices. In the heat of the summer, when we were all vainly trying to keep cool upon the sun-baked Rock, he invited a few choice spirits to a midnight picnic to the Cork Woods. We were a number of well-assorted couples, who were to sup in the First Pine Wood eight or ten miles distant from the Rock, and then ride about in the cool recesses of the Cork Woods until dawn. The fun of the thing was that we were independent of the "gate," where a somewhat unpopular officer kept watch all night to re-admit us when we chose to return. The Governor's A.D.C.'s had sent out the repast beforehand; supper was laid upon the carpet of fir spindles, and the Convent servants waited upon us as decorously as at a public banquet.

About midnight we mounted for our ride, and rode off two and two into the forest. At starting Sir Richard took me aside and asked me in a whisper, "Do you know your way about?" and I answered with some pride, "I know pretty well every inch of the Cork Wood, sir." "You know it well enough to get lost in it, you understand?" "Oh no, not at all, sir," I laughed, and putting spurs to my old black horse, who went by the name of The

Acrobat because he was so much addicted to tumbling, I pushed forward at a smart pace, followed by the whole party. One turn to the right, another to the left, and again to the left were sufficient to lose me veritably, and the result was that we all went hopelessly astray. Each couple took its own line, and we saw little of one another for some time. I began to be a little nervous as the night advanced, wondering how long our party might be doomed to stray under my diplomatic misleadership. Fortunately I espied through the brushwood the old tram line used for the transport of charcoal, and giving a view holloa I struck a bee line for it, and went straight into a deep ditch. The loud burst of laughter that greeted my mishap showed me that my companions were at no great distance. Presently they made their way round, avoiding the ditch, and joining me on the tram line. We were all pretty thoroughly tired by this time, and the grey light was not becoming to the ladies of the party, so the order was issued to turn homewards, and we reached the Bay-side Barrier about 5 a.m., after gunfire, so that the gates had already been opened, and the officer in charge had gone home to bed.

Not the least amusing part of this episode was, as we learnt afterwards, that the Spanish Governor in Algeciras had heard of the picnic, and was seriously afraid that we might come to grief. There were *mala gente* abroad in the Cork Woods, brigands who would have thought the English Governor and his friends a splendid prize. None of us believed the story, or would have been deterred by the report, for we felt ourselves equal to any band of brigands, although I doubt if there was a single revolver among the party. The Spanish General, however, did not allow us to run any risk, and quite unknown to us had told off a troop of armed Carbineros to escort us wherever we went. *Locos Ingleses*, "mad Englishmen," is a common phrase among the Spanish peasantry, but I must confess that the Carbineros were justified in using it if they followed me in my gyrations through the Cork Wood.

Our madcap picnic recalls a pleasant character of our Gibraltar life, and our many riding expeditions into Spain.



Many of us were fired to follow in the footsteps of that indefatigable Spanish traveller, Ford, whose "Handbook of Spain" in the original is perhaps one of the most charming books of travel ever written. We loved to sally forth on horseback, riding some specially favourite hack, a faithful companion and slave, whose moods and manners we knew by heart, whom we fed, watered and groomed for ourselves. We carried with us all that we wanted for our simple needs; a spare shirt, a map, a tooth-brush, and a pipe, and these two last useful articles became the emblems of the club we formed, which flourished exceedingly. We disdained servants or guides; the whole pleasure of the thing was in picking out our roads with the map according to our own fancies. In this way I have traversed the greater part of Southern Andalusia, following roads known and unknown, in the valley of the Guadiaro to Gaucin and Ronda, or by the coast road through Marbella to Antequera and Loja, and on to matchless Granada, lying under its mantle of everlasting snow.

An unforgettable memory is our entry into the Great Park that surrounds the famous Moorish Palace, under the abundant shade of the close-grown trees, first planted by our great Duke of Wellington, who owned a fine estate in the neighbourhood, the Soto, presented to him after the Peninsular War. The sense of coolness, in sharp contrast to the autumnal glare without, was heightened by the murmur of falling water, for the melting snow above is led down in stone-built channels through the woods to supply the fountains of the town below. Some of the current is caught and passed through the bath-rooms of the hotel, and the weary and heated traveller may find in a bath of ice-cold water an excellent fillip to his nerves. The only baths that can compare with them are those in the rapids of Niagara, where literally a stream of rushing water above the Falls has been diverted and passes through the bath-rooms with such force that even when holding a rope one is swept off one's feet into the far corner.

I may mention here that my visit to Granada was coincident with that of a party of French painters, with



whom I was privileged to spend much time when sketching and studying in the Alhambra. The most notable of these was Henri Regnault, who was afterwards shot outside Paris almost at the end of the Franco-German war. Regnault was a patriot as well as a great painter whose premature loss must ever be deplored. He flew to the ranks and shouldered his rifle as a private soldier when he heard his country was in danger. The most touching of the many personal records of that time is to be found in the diary kept by Regnault, published after his death. Clerin was another painting companion who has since won much fame, and Bartholemy became a very noted engraver and etcher. We were all excellent friends, of much the same age, and full of life and spirits. A night or two before we left, the Frenchmen gave us a ball, a regular students' ball in costume; Regnault disguised himself as a Red Indian, and one of the others as a Highlander, using a Spanish brown blanket as a kilt. This was a compliment to my companions, who all belonged to Scottish Regiments, the *enaguetas* or "petticoated men," the name by which those crack soldiers were known in Spain.

A word as to these companions of my travels. One, Alfred Charteris, died of fever contracted on the Gold Coast during the African war; another, Springer Hay, son of General Hay, of Hythe, did not live to make old bones, but died in South Africa, where he was employed as a conductor of transport in the Zulu War. The third, McLaren, still survives, and is the happy possessor of an equestrian picture painted by Regnault, but which unhappily lacks the face, for the artist, most fastidious of men, was dissatisfied with it, and scratched it out just before he returned to France. Regnault came to Gibraltar and spent some time with us. He had very pronounced English tastes, and was especially fond of coming to the meets and hunting with our hounds. He delighted too in mess dinners, and I remember on one occasion he became so excited with the reel dancing that he rushed into the middle of the "foursome," quite regardless of the others, and began the best imitation of the dance he could imagine, which degenerated into a frantic and

extravagant *can-can*. During the performance, which was greeted with yells of laughter, someone held on to the tails of his coat, and tore them from his back. It was a borrowed coat, lent by a friend in the garrison so that he might appear at dinner in proper costume.

From Gibraltar Henri Regnault crossed over to Tangier where he established himself in a studio and painted his great work, "An Execution in the Alhambra." For the curious architecture of the Moorish Palace he used his abundant store of studies made on the spot. His models he found in that strange western city of Tangier which is more eastern than the east, and to this day attracts the traveller by its quaint semi-biblical charm. Of this picture I will tell one story from Regnault's own lips, showing his mastery of technique. All who have seen it will remember how the stairs leading up to the throne are flooded with the gore from the decapitated body. Regnault had vainly tried to paint it to his satisfaction, and at last decided to let the blood, represented by a thick pigment, fall naturally down the stairs. He mixed a canful of carmine and megilp and threw it on the canvas. This "Execution" he had intended as the forerunner of a great picture he had conceived, but never lived to paint, of the magnificent progress of the Mohammedan conquest from east to west. Truly Regnault was too great a genius to be made "food for powder."

I owe my first acquaintance with journalism to Gibraltar. The *Chronicle* was a small, semi-official sheet published at the Garrison Library, a prosperous institution of larger uses than its name conveys. Originally started after the great siege, it was designed to meet the dearth of literature so keenly felt during that long and dreary period; and careful administration of its funds added constantly to its property. It had been endowed with a valuable site in the best part of the Rock; it was supported by ample subscriptions, and its shelves having been filled and the comfort of members provided for, the balance had been invested in building land, and in the addition of printing works, which issued a local newspaper. The editorship was entrusted to some official of the garrison, civil or military, and when I reached



Gibraltar it was conducted by the postmaster, Mr. Cresswell. My leanings to literature were already strongly developed, and I gladly contributed to the *Chronicle* from time to time.

In the second year of my residence Mr. Cresswell put a proposal before me which I willingly fell in with. He had been appointed Surveyor of Post Offices in the Mediterranean and Egypt, and he invited me to be his *locum tenens* during his long absences, extending over several months in each year. The duties were not severe, the remuneration was handsome, amounting to a third of the net profits of the printing establishment, my share being at the rate of £200 or £300 a year. As regards literary matter, I ran the paper single-handed, but I relied much upon paste and scissors, and I had a jewel of a sub-editor, Gordon by name, the best of men, and a fine specimen of his class. Brought up at the "case," his every thought was centred upon the *Gibraltar Chronicle*, which he loved with his whole heart, and fully believed to be equal, if not superior, to the *Times*, which often quoted from our columns, and I am sure Gordon thought these extracts increased its circulation. I can see him now, when he reported himself to me at my quarters in Secretary's Lane at an early hour, in his tall hat, which he never took off even when in his shirt sleeves; with his honest face, grizzled hair, and spectacles, watching his opportunity to avoid the dogs that denied him free admission. Gordon held very strong views about the misgovernment of Spain, and never failed to denounce its political generals in no measured terms. I imbibed from him such a poor opinion of my neighbours that it was often reflected in what I wrote.

This got me into very hot water with my masters at the time when diplomatic relations between England and Spain were severely strained in the *Tornado* affair in 1866. This ship was seized off Madeira by the Spanish frigate *Gerona* on the pretence that she was destined as a war vessel for Chili, then at war with Spain. It was, however, proved that the *Tornado* was British built, carried a British register and a British crew; she was totally unarmed, and laden only with coals and provisions necessary for her voyage to Rio Janeiro. Law proceedings were instituted, and eventually



the Spanish Government paid an indemnity of £25,000 to her owners and £12,500 to her crew. But the dispute was so embittered that at one time a rupture between the two countries was quite probable. I ventured to remark in an editorial that England was bound to be forbearing in her treatment of Spain. "We should put up with her tormenting just as a Newfoundland dog submits to the annoyance of a smaller member of his own species," I wrote. "As he with one blow of his great paw could stretch his tormentor helpless, so we, with one effort of our vast naval strength, could overcome our enemy."

It was a poor bit of fanfaronade and cock-a-doodle-do, but the Spanish Consul on the Rock, hitherto my very good friend, took it in bad part and abused me on every side, declaring "I had treated Spain as if she were an old shoe." He went so far as to threaten to have me stopped by the Spanish sentries when next I rode out across the frontier. I suffered no interference, however, but he lodged a complaint against me with our own authorities which was more effectual. A formal letter was in consequence addressed by the Colonial Secretary to the President of the Garrison Library as chief owner of the *Chronicle*, in which the Governor espoused the Consul's part, and bade the Editor be more circumspect in future. No doubt he was wise in deprecating my attitude, but I was very indignant at the time, and I see in my diary of that date a good deal of vapouring about the infringement of the liberty of the Press, and the insufficient reasons given by the Governor for putting on the gag. Sir Richard's argument was that in a semi-official sheet it was our best policy to keep friends with our neighbours, and to avoid hurting their feelings or treading upon their toes. He looked chiefly at the chances of petty annoyances on the spot—interference with our rides into Spain, and a check to the hunting and shooting we so freely enjoyed in the neighbourhood, all of which, although sound in itself, I scouted as unworthy of the English Governor of a great fortress. Naturally I could not but submit to the ruling of my superiors, and for a long time altogether abstained from

touching upon Spanish affairs. The political situation in Madrid grew worse and worse, and rumours of coming trouble filled all papers, Spanish and other, but I held aloof to the very end. I got my chance at last with the outburst of the revolution in 1868, when the fugitive followers of Isabella flocked into Gibraltar flying for their lives, and even the troops near at hand "pronounced" in favour of Prim.

The literary training I got on the *Gibraltar Chronicle* was distinctly useful in more ways than one. I gained some insight into journalism, learnt to assimilate ideas rapidly and express myself with facility. The work, according to the usual practice, was done against time. The day's news came in the morning, brought overland by the Spanish postman, who rode in from St. Roque with my bag of newspapers, the oldest news being in the London dailies, five days back; the latest in the telegrams in the Madrid papers, reaching us in two days overland. We received no telegrams direct, except, and rarely, through official channels. Of course the *Times* was my sheet anchor, and I trusted a good deal for foreign opinion to the *Indépendance Belge*, always an ably conducted paper, to the *Paris Temps* and *Débats*, and for Spanish politics to the *Correspondencia* and the *Imparcial*. The post came in about 7.30 to 8 a.m.; Gordon, my good sub-editor, appeared within an hour, and with him I discussed the subjects of chief interest and decided what should appear.

It was not all paste and scissors; although quotations were inserted bodily it was my pleasure to re-write and put the best matter freshly and briefly, so as to cover more ground. The practice acquired in my editorial work was very useful to me afterwards in public business. Minute writing, letter drafting, became easy enough to one who had had to deal promptly with literary matter. I had assistance, however, amateur and unpaid, no better perhaps than any other gratis work. But it was done *con amore*. My sporting news was of the best, and contributed by men who knew their subject. Our race meeting was reported in full by the officials of the course, owners and riders talked about



their horses, and described events with intimate knowledge and great spirit. The *Chronicle* readers might always be certain of a stirring account of any fine run with the Calpe hounds from someone in the first flight, and all local matters of interest were recorded, such as the movements in the garrison, the arrival and departure of regiments and individual officers, dramatic notices of all performances, garrison theatricals, Spanish opera and *zarzuela* company; and some very creditable and amusing stuff was to be found from time to time in the Poet's Corner. All shipping news, interesting and otherwise, was reported from the signal station on the top of the Rock, and we repeatedly learned with bated breath "that half a dozen lateen craft had proceeded eastward laden with sundries." I could count the hours to the receipt of letters from the approaching mails. Everyone could read the flags that flew announcing important events, even that which told of a "convict escaping accompanied by a gun." It was the raising of the flag and not the convict that was so accompanied, although some wag with a facile pencil had depicted the wretched fugitive climbing the walls carrying a great piece of artillery on his shoulder.



## CHAPTER X.

ALICANTE, BARCELONA, MADRID.

The Abyssinian War—Purchase of Spanish Mules for Transport Service—At Alicante—An Offer from the "Key of La Mancha"—"In Death they were not Divided"—A Stampede—A "Foreign Legion"—Assisting a Fugitive to Escape—At Barcelona—A Stormy Interview with a Consul—A Challenge—To Madrid on a War Office Mission—Shady Characters—How to Bribe a Prime Minister—The Countess of Montijo, Mother of the Empress Eugénie—Pedro el Salado—Back at Gibraltar—Literary Efforts.

SUDDENLY and abruptly a break came in my life at Gibraltar, which, though full of work, was in its way monotonous. Returning home one evening from my ride on the beach I found a messenger from Colonel Maberly, R.A., the chief artillery officer on the Rock, asking me to dine with him and talk over a matter of importance. It appeared that a telegram had reached the Governor from England directing him to purchase a large number of mules for transport purposes in the war just declared against King Theodore of Abyssinia. I had been selected to take charge of this, and Colonel Maberly, who had discharged the same functions during the Crimean war, was to coach me for the job. The way proposed was to advertise in the local papers and establish a mule purchase depôt on the North Front, where the animals would be received and cared for until shipping arrived to take them to the Red Sea. Sir Richard, who desired to take an active share in the purchase, selected a number of the most active officers, knowing in horseflesh, to visit Spain, ventilate the project, and beat up the markets of supply.

Some days passed without producing any answer to our advertisements, and it became very doubtful whether the dealers would bring in mules for sale and run the risk of their rejection. At the same time further advices

came from home to the effect that very much larger numbers than we had at first supposed would be immediately required. The Secretary of State for War at that time (1867), General Pakenham, afterwards Lord Longford, had thrown himself into the question heartily with great energy. Time pressed; animals must be got without delay, and already officers had been despatched from home to all the great European centres of supply. It was quite clear we could not wait for the filtration of our advertisement through Southern Spain, or the slow distribution by officers on horseback of the news of our needs, and Sir Richard therefore instructed me to proceed forthwith to the east coast, along which mules are bred in great quantities, and I was to report what contracts I could make, and what hope there was of securing any considerable supply. I had a fair knowledge of Spanish and some experience in the country. Within four and twenty hours I started *via* Malaga, Cordova, and Jaen to the east coast of Spain, meaning to establish my headquarters at Alicante, in the very heart of a prolific mule country. It has, moreover, a commodious harbour with deep water alongside its mole, and the embarkation could be carried out with ease when the necessary shipping arrived.

Almost simultaneously three other officers reached Alicante from England, and I was desired to co-operate with them. One was Whinyates, famous in his time as one of the smartest Captains of Horse Artillery; the second, an Assistant Commissary-General, C.; the third, Partridge, a well-known veterinary surgeon, attached to the Royal Artillery. At the same time two other parties, or "commissions" as they were styled locally, were ordered to Spain, one for Valencia and the other for Barcelona, while, in his eagerness to be abreast with the demands, General Pakenham had entered into a contract with a private firm to supply mules from another part of Spain. These, to the number of a thousand, were to be sent on to Alicante, and placed under our charge until they could be shipped off to the Red Sea.

Our orders were to open up relations at once with the British Consul at Alicante, and we found an aged, very

courtly old gentleman, who had borne the rank of colonel in De Lacy Evans' Spanish Legion, and who was by this time half a Spaniard. He was hospitable to the extent of asking us to a *tertulia* or "at home," and useful in obtaining for us our first employé, Miguel, of doubtful character for honesty, but yet an invaluable assistant.

One feature of the business we were engaged upon was highly satisfactory to us personally, and it is worth mentioning as one of the few occasions (within my experience) in which the British Government behaved with great liberality to its officers. The rate of pay fixed for all employed in this business of mule purchase was three guineas *per diem*. It was an Eldorado for us; better than the pay of a Major-General on the staff. How or why the pay was so high I have never been able to gather, but it had the effect of stimulating us to our very best efforts, and I had the good luck to draw it for nearly five months. In the end this windfall was exceedingly helpful in squaring my bankers' account at Gibraltar.

The first point to settle was the method of purchase. Should we work wholesale or retail? Buy one by one, over the counter as it were, or contract for a number to be delivered on a certain day? Our colleagues at Valencia and Barcelona adopted the latter course, and the first were in due course rewarded with a fine level lot of animals, five hundred of them, at a high average price, some £25 a head; the second waited hopefully, but got no replies to their advertisement. We decided to try our luck with what were brought in, and in the end our average rate was a little under £20 for a good, sound, medium-sized beast. There were drawbacks at the very outset to our system. We had grave doubts for a time whether owners would come in to our market; then we had to make all the arrangements for stabling, feeding, and caring for our animals. This included the rent of buildings and their fitment, the purchase of forage, the provision of head-stalls and nose bags, on all of which our overseer, Miguel, had, of course, fine pickings. The question of stables was solved by our securing the local bull-ring, not just then in request for performances, and the



central arena became our market-place, while in the outer circular covered corridor was ample space for housing some five hundred animals, separated by parting bars, and tied up to iron rings. When the numbers on our hands greatly increased—and at one time we had upwards of 1,200 in charge—we made use of a wide space outside the bull-ring, which, for a small rental, the local authority eventually allowed us to enclose.

On the first day of purchase we drove up in the hotel omnibus, the four of us, to find a long table laid out across one end of the bull-ring, and at a given signal the great gates were opened to admit the considerable crowd of men and animals that were collected outside. One of the first to appear was an imposing personage—a mulatto-faced gipsy in the picturesque garb of his district, a white vest, short white skirt, black gaiters, black *faja* (sash), and black circular bull-fighter's hat. This gentleman came to me, as spokesman of our party, and announced himself as the "Key of La Mancha"; when he "unlocked the door we should be overrun with mules." I thanked him, and begged him to put the key in the lock. But now he took me aside with much mysterious solemnity, and proposed a preliminary bargain. Was not our advertised price for a perfect animal fulfilling all conditions of height, age, temper and soundness 150 dollars (£30)? *Bueno*. Every mule he produced should be charged at that price, nominally, but the sum paid to him should be one arranged between him and me, and the difference between that and £30 he and I should divide. "*Esta usted?*" Did I understand? I did, perfectly, and my answer was to have the "Key of La Mancha" ejected from the bull-ring, telling him that British officers did not do such things, and ignoring his indignant protests that other officers would not be so squeamish about a bit of commission.

We got on excellently without the "Key." Indeed, his failure encouraged the smaller dealers to come forward, counting on fair play, which they got, but no extravagant prices, for we soon commanded the market, and practically fixed our own terms. The process was very simple. A mule was led past our tribunal once or twice, and the point

settled whether it should be further examined or at once rejected. In the latter case it was dismissed with its owner, not seldom to reappear by-and-by in the hope of slipping through unobserved. If the beast looked likely, our vet., Partridge, took it in hand, and ended a close examination by seizing it by the head and belabouring it with a rib-roasting staff to test its temper. Sometimes he was dragged half over the ring, and seemed in peril of his life, but as Partridge stood six feet two and weighed thirteen stone, the mule had always the worst of it. Last of all the price was fixed among us, the amount recorded on a slip of paper, and handed to the owner, to take it or leave it. We seldom, if ever, increased our offer by a single dollar, and, as has been said, our average purchasing price was about a hundred dollars, or £20.

We were faced very early with a serious difficulty, a great scarcity of specie. Cash had to be paid for our mules and was not to be had in any large amount in exchange for treasury bills, and our commissary was in despair. He was one of the old school, brought up to work "on paper," and after the first failure to obtain specie he retired to his bedroom, and fired off several long official letters at us, his colleagues, whom he could have found in the next room. His chief desire was that, in this dearth of specie, we should abandon retail purchase and go in for contract, so that he might pay by cheque or bill in one or two lump sums and be spared the inconvenience of providing cash daily. Whinyates and I stuck to our own system as the cheapest and best, and forced the commissary to go further afield for his money.

One telegram to our Minister at Madrid and another to the officer in charge of the commissariat chest at Gibraltar soon obtained for us sufficient supplies of specie, but C. took it in rather bad part. After this he would seclude himself for hours in his bedroom, carrying off the day's *Times* to enjoy himself in his own way. He did not remain long at Alicante, and was replaced by another commissariat officer of quite a different mettle—well known and esteemed in London; a keen, active, experienced man



of the world, who brought his wife with him, a charming English lady, who joined our hotel party, and greatly helped to lighten our incessant labours by her gracious presence. I remember one good story she herself told with delightful frankness. I had taken up with me from Gibraltar a lively youth who was my own body-servant, but who was more or less annexed by everybody, and who was Mrs. W——'s most devoted slave. One morning she came down to breakfast and told us how Paco had taken up the morning letters to her room. "You can't come in," cried Mrs. W——. "Why not?" asked the impudent young rascal. "Because I'm in my bath." "I won't look," replied Paco.

The organisation of the whole body of men and mules had been my particular duty. It had something of a military character, of course. One muleteer was engaged for every eight animals; for six batches of eight, or forty-eight in all, there was a *cabo*, or corporal, and a *capataz* (overseer) took charge of six corporals with their two hundred and eighty-eight mules. Precise regulations were framed for conduct and daily routine; the hours for "watering order," feeding, cleaning, exercising, and cleaning down, not a very elaborate process. There was a stable picquet and a corporal of the day, also a night guard; but, as a rule, the bulk of our employés slept in their blankets in any snug corner they could find in the ring. They were a queer lot, the riff-raff and sweepings of the district, glad to earn a few *pesetas* (shillings), but not too willing for work, often cross-grained, with nasty tempers easily aroused. Quarrels were frequent, and the knife, the cruel, long-bladed *navajo*, curved and double-edged, soon settled the dispute. One fight I can especially remember from its tragical end. Two of our men had engaged in a combat *à l'outrance*, and they were found in the street locked in each other's arms, both dead. One had stabbed the other in the breast; his opponent, although in the death throes, had flung his arm round and buried his knife in the other's back under the shoulder blade. They could not be easily separated, and were buried just as they were found, together. Our men were, indeed, so truculent a lot that it was not considered safe for us to visit the Ring



at night. But we went regularly, making surprise inspections, and only learnt long afterwards that the local authorities had detailed a couple of policemen to watch over us from a distance.

Our purchasing proceeded smoothly enough, but we had an occasional *contretemps*. One was a terrific storm, following a drought of nearly fifteen months; the thunder pealed and the lightning played incessantly the whole night through, and rain fell in torrents. We happened to have an unusually large stock of mules on hand, for the first consignment had arrived from Madrid; some were still in the railway station when the storm broke, and there was a general stampede of the terrified beasts. Many of our own, picketed outside the bull-ring, also got away, and wandered far into the country round. We recovered those we had ourselves purchased, for they bore our brand on the right hoof, "A. L." under a crown, burnt in the moment they were passed. But the contractor was not so fortunate. This escapade may have started the wandering habit so many Spanish mules developed when disembarked at Zillah, on the Red Sea littoral. Half, it was said, bolted, and were lost. But there was another reason for their running loose. In discussing equipment with the War Office at home, we had recommended the use of chain halters for all headstalls. The economical office "shied" at the expense, and we were ordered to purchase rope halters locally. The best we could obtain were made of *esparto* grass, a common product around Alicante. But the poor beasts on landing, having been kept short of forage, greedily devoured their halters and bolted. So the Government saved a shilling or two on equipment and lost a mule worth £20.

Another difficulty cropped up, and for a time threatened to check progress. We had been desired to secure muleteers, or men willing to engage for a voyage to the Red Sea in charge of animals, and the story got about that we were raising a Spanish Legion. It reached the ears of the local authorities, civil and military, and produced a very formal call from the Civil Governor of Alicante and the Colonel commanding the garrison, who invited us to show our

credentials. It was an infringement of international law, of the foreign enlistment, they thought, and begged us to pause until their Government could be consulted. Naturally we gave them every assurance of our desire to meet them, at the same time explaining the exact state of the case. We never heard any more of the foreign legion. These were times of great political effervescence, Narvaez was in power at Madrid, conspiracy was in the air, and Queen Isabella's Ministers had no time to give to us.

Nevertheless they might have fallen foul of us, very seriously, for assisting a political fugitive to escape from Spain. It was done in all innocence I was about to say, but I had some suspicion of the circumstances at the time, although I did not feel called upon to say anything. There was a steamer alongside the mole taking a freight of mules on board, her complement had been shipped, and she was on the point of hauling out to sea when one of the people came to me saying he had a friend very anxious to engage for the trip. That was a very simple matter, and I said so; the man had only to enter his name, and he would be despatched in due course. But this man wanted to go now, at once, and such stress was made of the point that I said the applicant might appear before me. There was a difficulty about this, but I agreed to see him at the *posada* or inn where he lodged, and I found a tall, military-looking person, most unmistakably a gentleman, although dressed in the local costume as a Valencian peasant. There was a hunted look on his face, and he eyed me very anxiously while he awaited my decision. No doubt he was wanted, had been concerned in some of the recent *pronunciamentos*, and there was probably a price upon his head. I could not believe it to be any business of mine. We took any suitable man who offered, and here was one of quite the best stamp as regards physique. His "papers" were in order (not his own probably, but they satisfied our Consul), and so he went with the steamer. I heard it whispered afterwards that he had been a colonel in the army, but I never knew for certain, nor what became of him.

The shipment of the mules did not end my connection



with the Spanish purchase. Complaints were made in connection with the contract of which I have spoken, the proceeds of which passed through us at Alicante. We could see at once that the mules were inferior in quality to those we purchased on the spot, and yet they cost more. In the end I was sent to Madrid to enquire into the method by which the animals had been obtained, and I found out enough to prove the inferiority of the contract system as then tried, to that upon which the other purchases were made.

While at Alicante I received instructions from the War Office to break ground in another locality. I was to proceed forthwith to Barcelona, accompanied by a commissary and a veterinary officer, in order to deal with a large number of mules collected there on the faith of advertisements issued by the British commissioners who had been sent there to work that city. These officers had publicly announced their readiness to accept all mules answering certain conditions, and to pay for them at a fixed price. They waited patiently a month or more, and waited in vain, no mules were brought in for sale, and it was plausibly explained that the Catalonian mule is such a fine beast, so much in local request, that the price offered tempted no one. In the end our officers, who were doing nothing for their money (£3 per man *per diem*), were recalled to England.

Shortly after their departure it was reported that they had left too soon. The news of the proposed purchase had spread very slowly through the district, and the answer came in tardily. But it came in the person of contractors and others who had busied themselves to meet the advertised demand, who had entered into engagements with mule owners, and who were now prepared to produce a considerable supply. To their disgust they found no buyers. Our British officers had gone, and the poor, misguided people who had trusted to the honour of England were left with a number of animals on their hands and the near certainty of having to face a serious loss. This was a just complaint on the face of it, and it was backed up by the only British representative left—the Consul at Barcelona.



My instructions were, directly I arrived in Barcelona, to announce that the British Government was prepared to buy all mules collected on the faith of our advertisement, provided always they fulfilled the published conditions.

The first consideration was to keep faith with the Spanish public. At the same time I did not need to be told to exercise judgment, and avoid all but the most undeniably good beasts, those which would pass the vet., and were worth the money. We were in every other respect to follow the plan pursued at Alicante, arrange for the housing and care of the mules until the arrival of transports to convey them to the Red Sea.

As the Consul had, so to speak, fathered the complaints of the supposed sufferers, our first step on reaching Barcelona was to call on him and state the object of our mission. We never got much out of that Consul, who, I fear, did not in the least wish to see us, and we certainly did not find it easy to see him. We called fruitlessly several times; we wrote him pretty sharply, but we were long in getting a reply. At last I had a brief letter from him headed "*Re mules*" (I have it still), in which he vaguely said he would attend to us as soon as the pressure of his consular duties would permit him. He had but lately arrived, and had not yet got his *exequatur* from the Captain-General, and so on. We were not to be put off like this. A party of British officers, representing the British Government, could not tolerate such treatment from a colleague, and I have a pleasing recollection of a very lively scene with our friend the Consul, into whose presence we somewhat unceremoniously forced ourselves.

One of the results of this stormy interview was rather comical. That same evening a Neapolitan general, an exiled adherent of King Bomba, whom I had known at Gibraltar not long before, called on us at the Hotel of the Four Nations. He was a man of fine presence, with a very dignified manner and a magnificent voice, who bore his reverse of fortune bravely. But when he told me with a grave face that he was the bearer of a cartel from the Consul, who wished to call us out, all three of us, col-

lectively and singly, I am afraid, I laughed in his face. Yet I doubt whether I succeeded in explaining the joke to him. That an irate British official should desire to fight a duel with three brethren in arms, or, more exactly, three fellow servants of the Crown, because they insisted on doing their duty, was humour too refined for the Neapolitan.

Consul or no Consul, we went on with our business; published notices, secured ground for the mule market, settled all preliminaries, and prepared to purchase mules. The complaints formulated had been very specific; the injury done to contractors was set at a high figure, and we naturally expected to be inundated with mules. Nevertheless, the whole thing was a ludicrous fiasco. On the day we opened our purchase not half a dozen mules were brought before us, and one and all were sorry, broken-down brutes, hardly worth their hoofs and hides. The next day none were received at all; the third, a letter was received from a contractor with an English name, who called upon us peremptorily to take over seven mules he had bought on our account. I forget whether he showed them; if he did they must have been rubbish, for we certainly did not buy them. No others were tendered or appeared.

The affair did not, however, end here. The contractor I have just mentioned appealed to the law, and we were summoned to appear before the "Judge of the First Instance" to answer for our failure to fulfil our engagements. There was nothing for it but to defend the action, but the War Office decided that I could do that alone, and my colleagues accordingly left for England. I engaged counsel, a very learned and very long-winded Don, who gave his opinion with great force to the effect that the plaintiff had not a shadow of a case. That was never put to the test, for the judge non-suited him on the ground that only one of the three defendants, myself, was present. As the others had been permitted to leave Spain, he must quash the proceedings.

From Barcelona I went to Madrid on another War Office mission. The mules bought under contract, which were forwarded to us at Alicante, had been, as I have said, disappointing, and an opinion that they were below the



standard of value was now endorsed by the reports that came back from Abyssinia. As I was at a loose end I was desired to proceed to Madrid and investigate.

I was accredited to the British Legation, and met with a very different welcome to that accorded to me at Barcelona. Mr. Sackville West (afterwards Lord Sackville) was Chargé d'Affaires in the absence of Sir John Crampton, and his assistance was invaluable. By his advice I associated myself with an English barrister who knew Madrid well, and together we hunted up a *valet de place* who had an intimate acquaintance with all the *chalanés* or gipsy or other dealers who dealt in horse and mule flesh in the "Corte," or capital of Spain. This man, whose name was Adolfo, at once declared that there was one person of all others to help us, a certain Pedro, "El Salado," who had, he knew, been much mixed up with mule buying in the previous autumn. This useful personage was, however, absent from Madrid for the moment, and I had perforce to wait for his return. He came at last, and with his help I gained the knowledge of certain facts which it is not worth while at this distance of time to recall, but which I duly reported to the War Office. There the matter ended.

I found life in Madrid very pleasant, especially in watching what went on around. It was at that time a general centre for rascality. People said that it was full of three classes, "rogues, fools, and policemen." I presume I belonged to the third class, although I had not yet got on the fringe, even, of what I afterwards became. Those were times when the law of extradition had not been extended to Spain. My barrister friend pointed out to me at the *table d'hôte* more than one interesting person who was very much wanted at home. There was the absconding member of a great firm of bankers that had recently smashed; opposite to him sat a detective, whose business it was to decoy him back, if possible, to England. Not far off was a fraudulent bankrupt, who had fled to avoid criminal proceedings. One or two were, no doubt, even greater offenders. Then there were numbers of hungry folk seeking concessions from the Spanish Government, and altogether unscrupulous as to



the means of obtaining them. I heard one man sadly complaining to another that he could do nothing with Narvaez, at that time Prime Minister, and practically the despotic master of the land. "I went straight to him and offered him 5,000 dollars for his good word. Would you believe it? He sent an *aide-de-camp* to me next day to call me out." He did not add whether he had fought or not, but his friend rebuked him for his methods. "Serve you right for being so silly. That is not the way to work it. Now I happen to know that Narvaez is very sweet on a pair of pure-bred barbs standing at a certain dealer's in this city. Take my advice, buy them and send them into Narvaez's stables. I'll manage that he shall know where they come from." I heard not long afterwards that the concession had been granted.

So much for the foreign element in Madrid, the visitors and sojourners at the hotels, of whom I may confess I soon wearied. But having some command of Spanish I was fortunate enough to be welcomed into good Spanish society, was invited to many balls and *tertulias*, where I enjoyed myself hugely. One of the pleasantest houses was that of the Countess of Montijo, the mother of the Empress Eugénie, a lady of English extraction, the daughter of a Mr. Fitz-Patrick, who had been English Consul at Malaga in the early decades of the century. Madame de Montijo had not forgotten her English, and I remember her kindly welcome. "It gives me great pleasure to receive an English officer in my house." There was a good deal of English talked in Madrid then as now, not always the best or the most fluent. I can remember being introduced to a young American lady, the daughter of the American Minister, whom I asked for a dance. "Why," she said, "you speak English quite nicely, not at all like these *pollos*" (chickens), that being the current name given in Madrid to the young men we call "mashers" and "chappies," and so forth. We had a great laugh together when I assured her that I had a very good excuse for speaking English, although she would not allow my claim to speak it better than she did.

I had another good reason for rejoicing in my long deten-

tion at Madrid. As all art lovers are aware this capital is endowed with a comparatively small, but very complete, collection of pictures, made by the Spanish monarchs in past days, when money was plentiful, and they expended it liberally. Many fine specimens of the best schools were acquired and lodged in the Real Museo. Nowhere else can the great Spanish masters be seen in greater perfection; Velasquez at his very best in such magnificent works as the famous picture of the spears, entitled "The Surrender of Breda," "Los Borrachos," "Las Meniñas," the royal and other portraits, Murillo's "Assumption" and "Holy Family," Zubarans, Riberas, Goyas—the catalogue is long and varied. There are also Raphaels of world-wide renown, Guidos, Titians, Rubens, Vandykes, and the rest. To me it was a labour of love to spend many hours daily in this treasure house, and, as permission to copy was easily obtained, my time passed pleasantly enough, and with manifest profit in the development of technical skill. I had good subjects out of doors, moreover, in the older streets, in the Plaza Mayor, the scene of the horrible *autos-da-fé*, the Puerta del Sol, full always of local life and colour, the huge masses of buildings of the Royal palace, raised high above the insignificant *manzanares*, and, further afield, in the vast pile of the Escorial, a picture of no architectural beauty, but always an impressive object as the largest house in the world. I never was more struck than by one sight within this dreary wilderness of stone; it was the low, narrow doorway that led from the florid, over-decorated church into the small cell which was the favourite retreat of Philip the Second, and from which issued the dread mandates that ravaged two worlds with fire and sword.

The Spanish theatres, again, had especial attractions. There were many excellent actors to be seen, among them Arjona and Matilde Diaz, and their performances were always a treat; many plays of purely Spanish origin were produced—and I have often wondered why the hungry dramatist, ever seeking *le bien d'autrui* has not more largely exploited modern Spanish theatrical literature. One very notable line of acting in Madrid was that of the *zarzuela*, or



the prototype of our widely popular comic opera. The grand opera was, of course, much in vogue, and patronised by the Queen, Isabella, whose ample proportions might be admired as she filled the stage box to overflowing.

At last I got my *cong  * from Madrid, and was directed to return to my staff duties at Gibraltar. I spent two more years there—the happiest in my life, as I sometimes think—and constantly engaged in work that was very varied and always congenial. I have referred already to the many different lines in which I found an outlet for my energies, and tried to be useful to others as well as to gain experience for myself. It chanced that at the sudden death of the Assistant Adjutant-General,\* the functions of chief of staff fell upon me to discharge, and it was at this period that I profited by my close and constant relations with Sir Richard Airey. It was a responsible post for a youngster barely thirty years of age, and I hope I bore myself meekly and with discretion. About that time my Hythe certificate qualified me to act as District Inspector of Musketry, and release the holder of the post to go on leave. There were other than professional calls upon my time. I was a Freemason of long standing, having been initiated in Halifax, Nova Scotia; I joined a blue Lodge in order to pass through the chair, and I took several higher degrees, that of "Mark Mason," "Royal Arch," "Knight of Malta," and "Knight Templar," and was only prevented from rising to the 33rd degree by my absence in Spain.

The stage had always attracted me as an amateur, and I have spoken already of our theatricals at the Staff College.

\* Colonel Hugh Smith, C.B., who had served through the Kaffir wars with his uncle Sir Harry Smith, and afterwards in the Crimea as A.A.G. of the 2nd Division. He was in failing health at Gibraltar, and was taking a course of waters at the baths of Manilva in the mountains above Estepona, where he died. He was physically very feeble, but he retained to the last a caustic wit. On one occasion he was being worried in his office by a rather hectoring and overbearing colonel, who was taking advantage of his infirmities. "I believe you command the —th regiment," said old Smith, looking up at him rather vacuously. "Yes, certainly I command it," replied the Colonel unguardedly. "Then go and command it, and leave me in peace to do my own work," was the rejoinder.



Acting was a very favourite diversion with us, and it fell to my lot to be chosen as Manager of the Garrison Amateur Theatrical Company. We had a strong company, recruited from the garrison. Most of them have gone over to the majority, but I still meet some in the busy world—General Swaine, C.B., for example, who was our much admired *jeune premier*, General Rideout, also General John Slade, an excellent comic actor, now commanding the army of occupation in Egypt. Sir Arthur Havelock, afterwards the distinguished Colonial pro-consul, with his youthful face and smooth cheeks, was our "leading lady," and "Billy" Kirwan played the soubrette parts; there were Colonel Philip Twynam, Arthur Hood (now Lord Bridport), John Marshman, Moore Lane, George Beaty-Pownall, and many more. I did not emulate the modern actor-manager by putting plays on the stage to which I had the principal rôle, but I plead guilty to misusing my position so far as to produce a play of my own. It was an adaptation of the Spanish farce, "*Los Dos Sordos*," which, according to the *Gibraltar Chronicle*, gave promise of great triumphs in dramatic authorship, the fulfilment of which promise, I fear, still tarries by the way.

I have mentioned the Garrison Library when speaking of the *Gibraltar Chronicle*, the sheet which it owned, and which introduced me to journalism. I also became honorary librarian, a post that made no great demands on my time, but the work was very congenial to a book lover, as I have ever been from childhood to old age. The library contained a large collection of well-chosen books, the accumulations of years, and the high standard was well maintained by the annual additions. Strange to say, the Library was without a catalogue, and I gladly devoted my spare energies to preparing one, which was printed in due course, and which, with its somewhat lengthy preface I may call my first literary effort. My second venture, also at Gibraltar, was into the realms of fiction, my first novel "*Peccavi!*" a title afterwards appropriated unwittingly by my good friend W. E. Hornung, and given by him to a much better story than mine. I found a publisher in 1870 in Mr. T. Cautley

Newby, of Welbeck Street, who kindly allowed me to contribute £40 towards its production, and, I hope, made a better thing out of it than I did. My "Peccavi!" was certainly not a commercial success. As to its merits, my critics differed considerably. One began his notice with the words, "Neither Dickens nor Thackeray, nor even Bulwer Lytton or Scott, have penned such glowing passages as are to be found, &c." Another said the work of my 'prentice hand was "as raw as the joint of boiled mutton at an ordinary on board the Margate steamer." I have become by this time somewhat casehardened against criticism, but even then I was neither unduly elated by exaggerated praise, nor too much distressed by castigation.

## CHAPTER XI.

## IN CHARGE OF THE CONVICT PRISON.

Entering the Civil Service—The Old Convict Prison at Gibraltar—A Spirit of Turbulent Dissatisfaction—Reading Up for My New Duties—A False Confession of Crime—A Specious Coxswain—A Spurious Mutiny—The Two Cravings in a Convict's Mind—Securing a Prison Gate with a Necktie—I Narrowly Escape being Bayoneted—A Reminiscence of Wormwood Scrubs.

WHILE I was awaiting the arrival of my successor as Brigade Major on the Staff at Gibraltar (1869), the whole tenor of my future life was changed by an unexpected call to other functions. I responded as in duty bound, and gladly gave my services where they seemed so urgently required. I little thought that the charge I now assumed in an emergency would be more than temporary, but as a matter of fact, I was embarking upon an entirely new profession, and when I left my office on the Line Wall and rode up to the South, I was really bidding farewell to my career as a soldier.

The call came in this wise. There was trouble in the convict establishment; the Governor, or Comptroller as he was called, had broken down. He was suffering from nervous prostration, and his actions for some time past had been so irregular that it was seriously feared there would be an outbreak in the prison. To strengthen the bonds of discipline was my first task, as will presently appear.

Sir Richard Airey, who was at that time Governor of Gibraltar, paid me the high compliment to suppose that I was well fitted to deal with the crisis. He sent me a peremptory summons to attend him in the Convent. We were the best of friends, and I fully understood his abrupt ways, his short, sharp, soldier-like manner, and I knew that it pleased him to respond in the same fashion.



"You must go to the Convict Prison and take charge," he began.

"When, sir? "

"Now, this instant."

"This is Saturday, sir," I ventured rather rashly to protest. "Parade on the north front for H.R.H." (some travelling royalty on a visit to the Rock), and I pointed to my red tunic, intimating that I was in full dress.

"Someone else can look after the parade. Is your horse at the door? Ride out to the New Mole and keep things straight. They talk of a mutiny; stop that."

I saluted and turned on my heel, when he called after me, "And arrange to stay there till further orders." I again saluted, with a final "Very good, sir," and from that moment I became a member of the Civil Service.

The old convict prison has now been swept away in the extensive alterations and additions to the Dockyard, and it is hardly possible to indicate its exact position amidst the mass of buildings and chimneys which fill up all the space between Ragged Staff and the New Mole. In those days it lay at the north end, between the water's edge and the Line Wall. The main access was from the latter across a draw-bridge and by a circular staircase downwards into the very heart and centre of the prison. It hardly deserved the name, and was but a poor substitute for the imposing edifices that by this time were to be met with nearly all over England, embodying the latest principles of prison architecture, and with which everybody is familiar. Here at Gibraltar the prison consisted of a long, low, two-storied wooden shed, of fragile, flimsy appearance, seemingly, at first sight, quite unequal to ensure the safe custody of its inmates. A light iron gate at each end stood hospitably open, and between them was a narrow corridor from which opened right and left the cages or rooms, partitioned from one another, but having the fourth side merely barred. I found that these were the receptacles, the living places and day and night rooms of the prisoners, and that they were at this time full to overflowing. Saturday was a half day, and the convicts had already returned from labour, the quarrying, stone-dressing, and

loading and unloading of lighters and so forth, which were the staple employments of the prison.

I was escorted down the corridor by one of the Visitors, who supervised the higher administration and discharged many of the duties of magistrates at home; and as we passed along in our uniforms, we attracted the rather excited attention of the inmates of the big bunks or cages, who crowded up to the bars to examine us more closely. They would have accosted us, but for the warders on duty who were patrolling the corridor, and who constantly shouted, a little helplessly, "Quiet there!" "Less noise!" "Stand back!" orders scarcely obeyed. There was a loud hum of voices, a surly, even menacing murmur, not unlike the growls of imprisoned animals, an impression strengthened by the stealthy, cat-like tread of those who ranged up and down the space, trying to take exercise in the narrow limits afforded. One or two refused to be repressed by the warders, and thrust their faces through the bars, insisting on speaking to the Visitor; making requests, complaints, and principally demanding the redress of wrongs, mainly imaginary, to all of which the Visitor pointed to me, and said: "This is the new Comptroller, you must apply to him." Then I became the object of a searching scrutiny, inspired by many varied emotions. Curiosity was universal; some faces scowled malevolently, some were downcast, some sycophantic, seeking to curry favour with the man who was a new and unknown quantity, but whose character meant so much for their comfort or the reverse in their daily lives.

"You'll have to 'take' the applications," whispered the Visitor to me. "Everyone is entitled to see you if he puts his name down, and, as owing to B.'s (my predecessor) break up, the duty has been neglected for some time, the list is long."

By-and-by I was left to begin work, and crossing the yard to the Comptroller's office, I found I was awaited by a great crowd of convicts, marshalled in order just outside the door. There must have been nearly half the whole number in custody, a couple of hundred or more, paraded two deep, and in the strong sunlight I had my first opportunity of



making the acquaintance of the convict class, with whom I was to be largely associated in later years, and who, I am not ashamed to confess, were my principal means of livelihood for many years. I was reminded of this once by a plain-spoken criminal who was overheard upon "the works" at Chatham discussing me and my merits. "See that bloke yonder? If it wasn't for the likes of us here he wouldn't have a coat to his back," was the disparaging remark he made, and for which he was subsequently brought before me "under report." There was so much truth in the estimate that I could not find it in my heart to punish him. I only told him that at least the coat had been honestly earned.

In those days the ingenious theories of Lombroso and his school of criminologists had not been invented, and I had nothing but the light of nature to guide me in reading the predominating characteristics of these felon faces. I cannot say that I thought them wholly bad, in spite of such features as the prognathous lower jaw, the handle-shaped ear, the lowering brow, and more especially the furtive air which has been noted and well-described by scientific writers. "Their cringing and timid ways," says one, "the mobility and cunning of their looks, a something feline about them, something cowardly, humble, suppliant, and crushed, makes them a class apart. One would say dogs who had been whipped; here and there, a few energetic and brutal heads of rebels." Lombroso sums up his description of "born criminals" "as having projecting ears, thick hair, the thin beard, prominent frontal eminences, enormous jaw, the square and protruding chin, large cheek bones, and frequent gesticulations." It would have been impossible for me to say that those before me were all born criminals, a type indeed, the actual existence of which does not seem to me to be fully proved; but at least they exhibited many of the traits described, which, after long experience, I have found to be largely present in the dangerous classes, and possibly in a large percentage of the general population. For it is a common fallacy to suppose that the facial and other characteristics of the born criminal



are confined to the people who fill a prison ; the close observer will see them any day at his club, in the stalls of a theatre, or in the street, and this is a strong argument against the ingenious assertions made. A prisoner naturally looks his worst. Prison garb is, to say the least of it, unbecoming ; it enhances ugliness and makes no allowance for personal defects, and I was anything but favourably impressed by the first collection of prisoners I saw in any number, on this my *début* in prison management.

The peculiar conditions of the prison at that time, when discipline had been greatly relaxed on the one hand, and on the other many of the smaller privileges that were cherished and looked upon as a right had been withdrawn, had encouraged a certain turbulent dissatisfaction, which was evident in their arrogant and aggressive air. They held their heads high, their looks were insolent. They did not stand submissively silent, but comments were freely exchanged in loud whispers. They were talking, I was convinced, at me, commenting on my appearance and discussing the kind of man I was. For a moment they had quite the best of the situation, as they knew exactly what they wanted and took advantage of my ignorance, as a complete novice in rules and regulations, to frame the most preposterous demands. I realised from the very first moment that it would be quite impossible to answer them then and there, to give them satisfaction without committing myself hopelessly. I was stumped by the very first question put to me. A prisoner complained that he was kept upon a lower than the proper scale of diet ; I knew nothing about dietary scales. A second was indignant at an unjust forfeiture (as he thought it) of marks, and the attendant loss (remission), a boon of which I had never heard. The third came requiring me to arbitrate between him and the doctor, who did not understand his case, and refused to give him any medicine that would do him good. Others—members of a very numerous class—fiercely denied the justice of their trials ; others were absolutely innocent, and the evidence on which they had been convicted was tainted or foresworn ; the sentences inflicted were cruelly severe, if not quite illegal, and

they quoted statutes and precedents with the fluency of a practised counsel learned in the law.

I was in an embarrassing, even hopeless position. I knew that the only possible course was to gain time. I must learn something, as much as possible, of the business of administration, and that without a moment's delay. I cut the applications short, abruptly put an end to the interviews, promising all who had come before me to enquire fully into the facts and give them an answer on the following Monday. Then I proceeded to acquire all the knowledge possible in the interval. "Laying hands on all the authorities available," I quote from a memorandum recorded elsewhere, "books of rules, standing orders, printed circulars, official correspondence—I retired to the Comptroller's house, where my servants had made me up a rough and ready home, and there I studied the voluminous mass of details far into the night. Every spare minute next day, and again late into the next night, I worked on, conning my lesson diligently, painfully, but with ultimate success. By Monday afternoon, when the applicants were again paraded, their numbers already largely increased, I was in a position to dispose pretty summarily of all but the most complicated affairs."

I will mention one or two of the most intricate and misleading cases, to illustrate the difficulties of the position into which I had been suddenly pitchforked, and the ease with which the new hand becomes the prey of designing men. I well remember how completely I was fooled by a false confession of crime, a very favourite device with the prisoner class. A convict appeared before me, and in heart-rending accents, with despair and remorse in his countenance, imparted to me the dread fact that he had been a principal actor in an undiscovered murder committed upon an old woman in Tooley Street. The crime had caused universal horror from the hideous circumstances attending it, and the failure of the police to come upon the track of its perpetrators had been viewed with alarm and indignation. Here, as he told me, torn by terrible emotion, stood one of the culprits making voluntary confession of his crime. Not only was he driven by remorse to give himself up, but he



was resolved to betray his accomplice, who, strange to say, was also an inmate of the prison. This alone should have put me on my guard, for, in the disposal of convicts among the various prisons at home and abroad, it was then, and still is, the invariable rule never to locate together two or more who were "in the same case."

I sent for the second man, and a strangely dramatic scene was enacted in front of me. The second entirely repudiated the confession made by the first, altogether denying its truth so far as he was concerned, and his complicity with the murder. Then the first proceeded to upbraid the second, piteously, indignantly, trying all ways to bring him to a proper, contrite state of mind. Still the second stood out; but when the first reminded him of the details of the crime, the stealthy attack, the cowardly blow, the hideous death struggle, all told with the vivid realism that a conscience-stricken criminal would have at command, the hardened demeanour of the other suddenly melted, and he, too, became much agitated, and admitted his share of the deed. I found myself greatly moved, as indeed anyone might have been who witnessed this extraordinary scene. I gave full credence to the story so dramatically told, and decided to report it forthwith to the Visitor, with a view to further action. It was decided that as the two men now stood self-accused under the shadow of a most heinous crime, they should be held apart from their fellows, and treated as prisoners awaiting trial, on a better scale of diet, and with no obligation to hard labour. Each occupied a separate cell, and passed the time in greater comfort than the other convicts.

Meanwhile reference had been made to England, and in due course the answer came, entirely discrediting the confession. Neither of the men in question was within a hundred miles of Tooley Street on the night of the crime, and, as a matter of fact, one at least was in custody for some minor offence. They had heard of the murder at Gibraltar from some other convict who had come out from England, and putting their heads together had concocted the whole falsehood, the idea being to secure a temporary rest from



labour, and possibly a trip home for identification, it might be for trial.

This was quite the first, but by no means the last, of such spurious confessions that came under my notice. Long afterwards I remember a case at Chatham, where a convict and ex-soldier told a long and circumstantial story of a murder he had committed in India, when he had killed a comrade and buried him in the garden outside the cantonment. It was a pure fabrication, as was presently proved beyond all question. Such cases are numerous enough, both in and out of prison, and as I write I see one of the latest quoted in the morning papers. Everyone knows how frequently ingenious authors of some great and baffling crime will appear and give themselves up, without being in the slightest degree connected with the crime.

I have referred above to persistent protestations of innocence, and at first I was easily won over by them. It was a natural impulse to listen to some fluent-tongued man, when he pleaded, in moving language and deep distress of mind, the hardships he was enduring in suffering an entirely undeserved penalty. There was one man to whom I was quickly attracted, and in whom I took a deep interest. He was acting as the coxswain of the Comptroller's gig, and usually got my ear when I was travelling to town by water, or making my inspections of the parties working in Rosia Bay or Europa beyond. It had been a favourite craze with my predecessor to use his boat like a state barge. He had designed a special dress for the crew, not unlike that of men-of-war's men, and no one would have recognised them as convicts in this disguise. Whereby hangs a tale, which shall be told in due season. This coxswain, W——, had been a master mariner, the captain of a full-rigged ship, which had been cast away in some far-distant sea. There was a strong suspicion of foul play, and eventually it was discovered, either by diving operations or through her being washed ashore, that the ship, which, with her cargo, was heavily insured, had been deliberately scuttled. The holes in her hold were plainly visible, and it was shown at the trial that the captain had gone down with an auger to bore them in

her bottom. My coxswain had a specious tongue, and he almost persuaded me that there was no truth in all this, and that he was the victim of a vile plot. The charge, he declared, was the basest fabrication of some of his crew, whom he had ruled with too tight a hand. There was not a word of truth in it, as would be seen on a searching investigation. I was sorry for the man, and sympathised with him so far as to promise I would look into the case.

It was a far easier matter than I anticipated. The *Annual Register* was filed on the shelves of the Gibraltar Garrison Library, and one day I took down a volume which contained the trial in full. Never had there been a clearer case, evidence more unmistakable, or a more rightful sentence inflicted. I did not think it necessary to tell the man the result of my enquiry, but, when he next spoke upon the subject, cut him so short that he must have understood that I meant to be no more imposed upon.

There were some interesting features in this Gibraltar convict prison which may be worth recording. It was an ancient establishment, the buildings of obsolete construction, the system old-fashioned and out of date. It was on what is called the "congregate" or associated plan, in which all classes and categories are herded together, though not quite indiscriminately, for there was some attempt at classification, very imperfect, almost futile in effect. The most hardened, gauged by the length of the sentence and the frequency of previous convictions, were as far as possible kept apart from the younger and presumably less criminal. The fatal defect of all classification, beyond that of separating the tares from the wheat, the unmistakably evil from the approximately good, was always present, that the inner nature could not be taken into account. Actual character went for little; there were men more amenable to improving influence among the old gaolbirds than some of those with a "clean sheet." It was a mere matter of chance how a prisoner fared, except that he almost invariably deteriorated; the predominating example was bad, in many cases the worst possible. The most praiseworthy attempt was indeed made,



so far as facilities offered, to minimise the most flagrant evils of association; but it did not, could not, go far. A number of separate cells had been built for the isolation of those upon whom solitary confinement on bread and water might be inflicted, sometimes for a week or more, and these cells were also utilised for their more or less permanent occupiers, the utterly irreclaimable and irreconcilable old hands, who set all discipline at defiance.

They were the last surviving specimens of the type that has happily become extinct. They were the product of those terrible days when England shipped off her worst criminals to the far Antipodes, using the dregs of her population to work out their regeneration and become new men in a new land. No really reformatory influence was to be attempted in the lax and imperfect discipline prevailing, and, after all, it was impossible to devise or enforce anything better at such a distance from home. No doubt where discipline failed, unforeseen natural causes came in to redress the balance, and many who had left their country for their country's good might find greater advantages for themselves in an exile that was no hardship, but a very distinct and substantial boon. A very large proportion did well as settlers, traders, and more especially as miners in the newly-discovered gold fields; but there was a residuum that drifted back home, being veteran "lags" who had done time in the cruelty and oppression of Van Diemen's Land, or in the foul corruption of Norfolk Island. Some of these had gravitated to Gibraltar. They could be spotted almost instantly by an educated eye; swarthy from long exposure, with the hardened muscles and sturdy frames of those long inured to manual labour; having the jaunty and reckless air of men who know all about it, who have faced the worst and are ready to do it again. They knew their rights, as they saw them, and would argue questions of treatment as long as I would let them. They were quarrelsome, of hasty temper, prepared to "break out" at a moment's notice; to strike a warder or knock down a fellow convict with pick or shovel on the smallest excuse. They were a constant source of trouble and anxiety to a tyro like myself. I have described



some cases in which I was "got at" by specious stories and pretensions. It was far worse when they threatened overt resistance to authority, when chronic insubordination seemed likely to develop into open mutiny, and it was sometimes necessary to parade the military guard, with rifles ostentatiously loaded before their very eyes.

In this, however, anticipation was worse than the reality. I was never troubled with an actual outbreak, although I was once induced to believe one imminent, being again misled by a cozening rogue. One day a scrap of paper was picked up on the floor of the chapel after service, on which was printed in capital letters an incitement to rebel. It was headed "pick up and pass on," and in stirring language appealed to the whole body to rise, and use their united strength in overmastering their keepers. When this was brought I must confess that I was a little perturbed, although when I took my more experienced colleagues into my confidence they made light of it, as I learnt to do with similar threats later on. I was assured that it was all a hoax, that such things were common enough in associated prisons, and were generally invented by some astute persons, one or more, eager to curry favour by seeming to betray their comrades. I was now informed for the first time that prison outbreaks have seldom, if ever, succeeded because prisoners have no power of combination. They have no loyalty to one another. When there are two or more in a job, one of them will be almost certain to betray the rest, and as the numbers increase so do the traitors, all eager to be first in making themselves safe.

In this particular case, other "stiffs"—the prison term for anonymous or clandestine letters—were scattered about, and I was still in doubt as to what might occur. Presently a convict appeared before me and asked for a private interview, which I arranged to give him on board the Hospital hulk, where I could talk to him confidentially as he lay in an empty ward. He had some very startling revelations to make, talked of a well-planned, widely-organised conspiracy for the seizure of the Admiralty tug used in hauling the heavily laden lighters from the quarries at Rosia; when

she approached the shore there would be a general rising of the convicts at work, who would attack warders and guard, and as many of them as could escape alive would take to the water and swim off to the tug, which, under full steam, would be steered across the bay to the Spanish side.

Forewarned is forearmed, and I persuaded the authorities to reinforce the military detachments on the works for some days. At the same time the tug was put to another job at another part of the Rock, and this, with such a formidable exhibition of strength, more than sufficed to overawe any turbulent spirits who might have been meditating mischief. But I had afterwards good reason to believe that the whole affair was a fraud, the product of the inventive brain of the man who had pretended to act the traitor where there was nothing to betray. He had devised it all, even to the manufacture of the "stiffs" intended to raise my fears. There might have been vapouring talk among the old hands whom I have described, but they had not the numbers, nor would they have had the courage, to try conclusions with their masters. They knew even then, and they most certainly do now, that they must come off second best. The worst form of insubordination shown nowadays will be noisy disturbance at inconvenient seasons, as during divine service, or in the exercising yard. The latest occasion that came under my notice was at Wormwood Scrubs in 1891, when I was the Inspector of that prison. It was a very feeble affair, beginning in chapel in jeers at the sermon, and continued in the yard, where it was very easily quelled. It was followed by the transfer of the malcontents to Dartmoor and Portland, and one of them expressed his feelings pretty plainly when he was taken into the van for removal: "They were bound to best us; they always do."

It has been often remarked that there are two ruling passions in the average male prisoner's mind. One is a craving for tobacco, the other a constant desire to escape from durance. The first is more easily gratified than the second. Tobacco is strictly "taboo"; its use is forbidden; its mere possession is a heinous offence, to be visited with extreme penalties. Yet, notwithstanding all precautions,



the forbidden weed finds its way within the walls. It has a varying price, depending like other quantities on the laws of supply and demand. Elaborate intrigues are for ever in progress to compass its introduction; traps are laid, schemes woven, to induce a weak-kneed official to betray his trust and join in the nefarious traffic, although he well knows that defection will cost him his place, with liability to prosecution in a court of law. The plan generally is to arrange with the prisoner's friends for the payment of cash for the tobacco supplied at something like £1 per lb.; and the "snout," its slang name, is introduced in small quantities, and distributed by the prisoners themselves. The circulating medium inside is food, whatever is portable—loaves of bread, pudding, cheese, scraps of meat, which are passed from hand to hand in the yards or on the works. Hence "passing food" is an offence, meaning that it covers underhand traffic in tobacco. Some very extensive transactions took place while I was at Gibraltar. One convict in a recent draft from England had contrived to bring out a substantial sum in money, so cleverly concealed as to evade the minute searching to which all are subjected. It was easy enough to "traffic" on the Rock, "free" people loafed about near the "works," and there were hiding places innumerable in the ground and among the crevices of the stones. We had news constantly of "stuff" planted for cash in exchange, and I spent long nights watching for the dishonest agents, but caught none, although we made many "finds" of goods.

I was not troubled with any successful escapes. One of a serious kind had, however, occurred not long before I took charge. I have spoken on an earlier page of the "Governor's gig," and the free use made of it. One day some convicts working at the New Mole had gained possession of a small boat, and made off across the bay before the escape was discovered. Then, as usual, there was a determined attempt to overtake the fugitives, and the Governor ordered out his gig, with a warder in charge. Half way across the bay the coxswain and crew rose, and overpowered the warder, and threw him, bound, in the bottom of the boat. Now the whole party, laying to their oars, rowed to



the friendly Spanish shore, where liberty awaited them, for no extradition treaty existed then with Spain.

I thoroughly enjoyed my life at the New Mole, as I learnt to call the convict prison, after prison practice, which prefers some euphemistic title to the official name. Thus St. Mary's Vale was used for Chatham, the "Moor" or Princetown for Dartmoor, Bluebell Hill for Borstal prison, the "Castle" for Holloway, and so on. Early hours were a supreme pleasure in the delightful climate of Gibraltar. My residence was in full view of the superb bay, whose waters came up to my garden. I had abundant occupation, novel and varied; I was not cut off from friends, mindful only of the dockyard rule that I must return before midnight, when the New Mole gates were closed. The same obligation naturally affected my guests, and led to an amusing episode with one of them who was staying with me for a time. He had gone home by the private way by the sea wall, just outside the prison, which ended in a palisade barrier bordering my garden. In this was a gate, closed at midnight by a chain and padlock of which I had a key; this I lent to my friend when he went out and intended to return late. Now he was so clumsy with his fingers as to let the chain slip through them and fall into the water, where it sank, of course, to the bottom. It would have mattered little but that the gate was so hinged that it lay wide open until it was made fast. The chain was gone, what could he substitute? He could find nothing better than his white necktie, which was just long enough for the purpose. The Chief Warder brought it to me next morning with a smiling face, saying where he had found it, and that he had succeeded in fishing up the chain.

On another night I had a very narrow escape of being bayoneted within the precincts of my own prison. I liked sometimes on returning late to pay a visit to the interior, to see if the military sentries who patrolled it were on the alert, and if my night duty men were at their posts. I carried my own pass key, and could let myself in anywhere. Passing through from the wharf, I began my perambulation inside, when I was abruptly challenged with a sharp "Halt!

Who goes there?" The answer "friend" would not satisfy my sentry, whose vigilance was, no doubt, seconded by nervousness, nor would he wait to call for the countersign, which I had ready for him on the tip of my tongue, but he came down at the charge, and my only hope of safety was in hasty and ignominious flight. Once before I had been chased by a wild Russian sentry at Baktchiserai, but I was at much closer quarters now. Fortunately, I was in uniform, and my pursuer recognised me before he could do me a mischief.

Apropos of the prison pass key, I little realised how grievous an offence I was committing against proprieties in carrying the key about with me beyond the confines of the prison. There is no rule more strict in prison economy than that which forbids the taking of a key beyond the walls. The responsibility is shared by the individual and the gatekeeper. It is the duty of the first to give up his key, and the duty of the latter to claim its surrender from the forgetful. One of my first acts on assuming the Governorship had been to attach my pass key to a steel chain, which I carried fastened to my braces wherever I went. I was rather proud of myself and my key, the truth being that I deserved to be fined nearly every day. I knew better afterwards—and this may be a good place to bring in an amusing adventure of mine many years later, when I was at Wormwood Scrubs. I was leaving the prison early, having a dinner engagement in London, and I had to catch a particular train, which would get me to the club in time to dress. The gatekeeper took my key and proceeded to lock it up in the safe, which he found to his dismay he could not open. The lock had become hampered in some way, and the key would not work. Time drew on as he tried, still ineffectually, and I became more and more impatient, fearing I should lose my train. At last I turned to the Chief Warder, who had come to see me off, and asked him if we had any burglar in custody just then. "There's J——, sir, employed in the carpenter's shop." "Send for him," I said, "and let him bring his bag of tools with him." The convict soon arrived, a smart, alert-looking man, with a dark, handsome face and clear

eyes, which twinkled comically when I asked him if he could open the safe. "Certainly." "Then fire away." J—— picked out a tool or two, and applied himself to his task with a will, and in less time than it takes to tell the job was done. "Thank you, my man," I said, whispering a word to do him a good turn at the first opportunity. My key was deposited in the inner safe, which was intact, and I found my way into town.



## CHAPTER XII.

## AT CHATHAM CONVICT PRISON.

Good-bye to the Rock—Through Spain and France—Retiring on Half-pay—Attempts to Return to the Army—Invited to Serve in the Ashanti Campaign—Appointed Second Deputy-Governor of Chatham Prison—The System there—Its Vices—A Martinet—His Foibles—The Daily Routine—Devices of Convicts.

My successor at Gibraltar was my good friend and colleague, Captain J. R. Lennox, with whom I served long afterwards as a brother Inspector of Prisons. His arrival out was my order of release, and I desired to act on it without delay. One fine Sunday morning (1870) I embarked with my baggage on a small boat, and made the round of the steamers in the bay, looking for one homeward bound. My quest was fruitless; the only one flying the Blue Peter was starting for Rio Janeiro. Still I had made up my mind to leave Gibraltar that day, *coûte que coûte*, and, failing the sea route, for which no passage offered, I resolved to take that by land which lay open before me. I was rowed across the Algeciras, landed at the little pier, and sent to a friendly livery stable keeper to bring me a couple of hacks. He had many a time and oft provided me with a mount for the waterfall behind the old Roman aqueduct. One now was to carry me over the hills to Tarifa, the other my baggage and the *mozo*, who was to bring the horses back. I was not sorry to bid adieu in that way to the dear old Rock, which I kept in view to the last, nor to revisit the old Moorish walled town, which I knew well, with its quaint streets and yet stranger Tarifeñan beauties, who still wear a mantilla concealing all the face but one eye. Next morning I took my seat in a "gondola" on four wheels, the Spanish name for a wretched mail coach that made the journey to Vejer and

San Fernando, where at last I got on board the train, which conveyed me in a leisurely fashion, with many stoppages, to the Pyrenees and beyond. I halted at Madrid, Burgos, St. Sebastian, where I stayed a day, again at Biarritz, and spent a week in Paris.

On reaching London, someone brought me a pleasant message from the head of the convict department, Sir Edmund (then Captain) du Cane, to the effect that he had some money for me, the arrears of pay as Acting Comptroller of the Gibraltar Prison. I was received most cordially, and with the added compliment of the offer of a permanent appointment in the prison service, which I civilly, but rather coldly, declined. I was at that time the senior Captain of my regiment, after a bare sixteen years' service, and when no more than thirty-two. I frankly confessed that I looked much higher. I hoped to rise in my own profession, to which I was warmly attached and to which I owed much. Yet circumstances led me within a month or two to solicit on my own account that which I had rather abruptly refused when it was first offered me.

The 63rd was under orders for India, and changes were foreshadowed in the upper ranks. One of the Majors approached me, saying he was willing to accept a half-pay lieutenant-colonelcy if I would guarantee him a certain sum, I think £1,800. It was impossible for me to produce the money, still less could I make sure of getting the step, technically "without purchase," and so secure the rank. I might, indeed, have raised it by making shift among relations and friends, but, while I was still debating, family reasons came in with arguments to which I felt constrained to yield, and I decided to retire on half-pay, as a preliminary to leaving the service altogether.

Looking back on that time, and calmly revising the reasons that led me to such a serious step, I cannot but think that I attached too much importance to them. In any case I left the service in direct opposition to the wishes of my military superiors. Sir Richard Airey was furiously angry, and wrote me in very reproachful terms, upbraiding me sharply for turning my back on prospects that were, no

doubt, most encouraging; cross-grained old General Forster, the Military Secretary, who had more than once stood my friend, took me to task very severely for my desertion. "Of course, you know your own business best," he urged (did I?), "but I think you are making a great mistake." He went on to tell me that the Duke had given me another appointment, that of Garrison Instructor at Cork, and that there was really no question of my leaving England. But I was obstinate; I could not stomach being superseded by a junior, who was about to purchase over my head, and I stuck to my guns.

A year later the situation entirely changed. After the surprises of the Franco-German war, Mr. Gladstone fancied he could most effectively remedy the defects in our military system by the abolition of purchase, and the whole of the conditions of army service, as they affected officers without capital, were changed by Act of Parliament, or more exactly by Royal Prerogative, for if I remember aright, the vote of the House of Lords was adverse to the proposal. It has been very generally agreed that the abolition was in the best interests of the country. Had I been content to wait a little longer I might have counted upon advancement without having to pay for it, but I do not repine, and I am willing to admit that such fortune as has come to me in other lines has quite equalled that of some of my colleagues and contemporaries, of whom I was long desperately jealous.

Indeed, I may say here that I made two half-hearted attempts to return to my old profession. I was still in the service on half-pay, but eligible therefore for re-employment, which I thought would not be difficult to obtain, as my old friend Sir Richard Airey was now at the Horse Guards as Adjutant-General. At this date that most surprising freak of military administration known as the "Control" department was at the zenith of its power and pretensions. It has now passed into the limbo of the many abortive attempts at army reform which have had much to recommend them theoretically, but have been found impracticable in the end. So much has happened since, that the present generation will hardly remember the "Control," which had been planned



exactly on the lines of the French Intendance, and adopted just before the Franco-German war threw discredit upon all French military methods. The scheme was grandiose, and placed under one head the whole of the civil branches of finance, supply, transport, barracks, and the rest. Its ambitious aims foredoomed it to the failure that was presently its portion. The idea had been to gather together from all sides the best men to work it, and my Staff College certificate and antecedents gave me some claim, backed by good friends, to be included in the number. I believe I went very near getting a post, but I was late in my application, for already the "Control" was tottering, and after waiting patiently for some months I heard that no fresh appointments would be made. The only result I achieved was to incur the strong displeasure of my own chiefs, who very properly resented my action as treating my position under them as of little worth.

Not long afterwards a second and much more enticing opportunity offered. It was resolved at last to despatch a considerable expedition against the Ashantis, and the command was given to the brilliant young soldier who was then on the threshold of his career. Sir Garnet Wolseley knew that the best way to succeed would be to surround himself with the most promising young men, and the wisdom of his choice was fully borne out by their performances in later years. One or two were my very intimate friends, and especially T. D. Baker, afterwards Sir Thomas Baker, who although he earned substantial distinction, died very prematurely. He had been a fellow-student with me at the Staff College, and we had kept up our intimacy ever since. Wolseley entrusted him with plenary powers to draw in friends likely to be of value in the coming campaign, and he was good enough to offer to recommend me to the young chief. For some time I was torn with grave doubts as to what I should do, but once more family reasons prevailed, and I declined a chance which I have always regretted, although I never grudged the rewards that came to others more enterprising. The Ashanti campaign was the turning point, the starting point, indeed, in the careers of such men

as Sir George Colley, Sir Richard Greaves, Sir Thomas Baker, Sir Redvers Buller, Sir Evelyn Wood, Sir Baker Russell, and many more, who ever afterwards accompanied Lord Wolseley into the field. But a few, no less promising men, perhaps, have left their bones on that lethal coast.

My desire to pick up the old threads of the soldier's life was greatly due to frank detestation of my work and surroundings at Chatham. I should mention that on making formal application to Captain Du Cane I found I was not too late; a vacancy still existed, and early in June I joined at Chatham as second Deputy-Governor of the prison. This convict prison was at that time the largest in the kingdom, probably the finest, the best organised and best "run." The prison population was upwards of 1,700, and the staff, superior officers, warders, civil guards, and their families must have numbered close on 2,000 souls. The chief command was vested in a Governor, with two deputies or assistants, of whom I was one; there were four or five chaplains, two representing the State religion, one the Roman Catholic, and one Presbyterian; two doctors, Scripture readers, schoolmasters, nurses, 101 warders of sorts, and civil guards. A subaltern's military guard mounted daily hard by the gates of the prison, found by the garrison, and one regiment lay in barracks half a mile from the prison.

I had much, nearly everything, to learn. My Gibraltar experience went for nothing. There was the barest similarity between the systems; in some essentials they were entirely different. Strict cellular separation was the rule while indoors, and although the prisoners laboured in association, or in gangs on the works, it was in silence, so far as this could be enforced among such a number of persons, often spread over a wide extent of ground. The rule was, no doubt, evaded, for there is a means of talking without moving the lips with which convicts are familiar. But all intercommunication was forbidden, and the rule was enforced by a stringent and meticulous discipline. It was easy to go wrong, very difficult to do right. Misconduct was scrupulously interpreted, the shadow of a "report" would hang



heavily over the whole body of convicts, and might fall in punishment for very trifling offences in those days. The report sheets, corresponding to the regimental guard reports, were voluminous documents recording innumerable lapses and laches that could scarcely be called serious. "Untidy cell," "not closing up in the ranks," "hesitating to obey orders," any of these might bring a man under report, and subject him to the penalty of forfeiture of food, meagre and insufficient at best, and loss of the still more prized remission marks, by which a man might by industry accelerate his release.

A very vicious system of reports and punishments was in force at Chatham when I first joined there. It extended really to the whole discipline of the prison, the heart and centre of which was the chief warder, whom I will call X. He was constantly actuated by the highest sense of duty, but he was a man of iron in the enforcement of discipline, and to his credit, be it said, in his personal punctilious observance of it. He often neglected the spirit, but to interpret its very letter was an abiding law to him. He governed himself by it, and exacted its most rigorous fulfilment by others, and this unyielding official held the whole of the prisoners in the hollow of his hand. It rested entirely with him to say whether any convict charged with breach of discipline should be pardoned or called to account. Every evening after return from labour he held an informal court of inquiry in the central hall, where the warder officers arraigned before him all those whom they desired to report for offences. The "chief" settled it in his own way. If he thought that a sufficient case was made out, the convict was sent for trial before the Governor next day. If the contrary, the charge was dismissed summarily. It is but fair to X. to allow him the best intentions. He was honest, and, on the whole, impartial, and he had had a life-long experience of the classes he dealt with. But, like every son of Adam, he had his prejudices (I will mention a few presently) and his favourites, and would listen patiently to this one, and cut that one unceremoniously short.

This practice was to my mind, however, trained as I



had been in the army, quite indefensible and intolerable. I beg leave to assert most emphatically that the soldier is more certain of fair play from his officers than any other class of subordinate from those above them. It is, or was, a standing order in the service in my time, that every man charged with an offence must be adjudicated upon by the commanding officer, the highest superior authority. This is the best guarantee against the misuse of power, the petty persecution, the small tyranny of non-commissioned officers; the best security for the fair and judicial interpretation of the rules. At Chatham the arbiter of the prisoners' fate was a subordinate officer, unchecked and irresponsible, wielding a usurped power without there being any written record whatever of the circumstances or proceedings. My colleague, the senior Deputy-Governor, also an old soldier, Captain R. A. Leggett, and I joined in protesting against this practice, and after a sharp conflict succeeded in throwing it down, greatly to the chagrin of the chief warder. He had his foibles, his weaknesses, very strongly marked. An old cavalry non-commissioned officer, he was always spick and span in appearance, and particularly concerned as to the brightness of the steel scabbard of his sword. It was the only steel scabbard carried by any chief warder in the convict service, he proudly asserted, and I believe he always polished it himself. He gloried in his position, always affected to despise us as newcomers, inexperienced in the mysteries of prison management and convict character, and looked down on us pityingly from the height of his thirty years' service. But we were his masters, and one day very effectually put him in his place by giving him a "half sheet"—in other words, using against him the weapon that kept the whole warder class up to the mark. When an officer failed in his duty a report was made to the Governor on a single sheet of foolscap, written on "half margin," one side for the charge, the other half for the reply. It was not easy to find so strict a precisian tripping, but X. gave himself away one day, and was reminded that he was human.

X. was very amenable to flattery, and more especially

in regard to the respect shown to him and the exalted nature of his position. It was his daily practice to make the round of the works, and this round was like a royal progress. Directly he hove in sight the principal warder in charge of the nearest district met him with a formal salute, and escorted him deferentially along a carefully-prepared path, swept and smoothed, and laid with sawdust, with planks bridging the muddy places, and as he passed along the chief received reports from his subordinates with the air of a general in the field. "Number four party, twenty-seven men, all correct, sir." "Number seventeen party, fourteen men, all correct, sir," and so on, through the length and breadth of "the Island," on which the great dock-yard extensions were in progress, as the land was recovered from the muddy wastes of St. Mary's Island, hitherto submerged by the Medawy at high tide. One principal warder passed on the chief to the next, and while he was at the works his superior officer, the Deputy-Governor—and one of us, technically, was always at the works—was quite neglected.

X. was fond also of high-sounding expressions. Some of his quotations were a joy to us. He always expected the officials to be at the "kee-vee," his idea of the words *qui vive*. I asked him one day whether the assistant-surgeon had inspected the complaining sick, and was told that "he had inspected them verbally." Once when much aggrieved at some adverse decision of his superiors, he declared that they treated him like "refuge." The word Admiralty was a terrible trial to X., and the nearest pronunciation he could get to it was "Ad-ma-ral'-ty." He often brought to mind a certain military Malaprop whom I had met with delight in my former service. He had risen from the ranks, having once been a drummer, and he liked to talk French, so as to show off his superior education. He called *pâté de foie gras* "Pâté de faux pas"; he had been to the opera once and came back to the regiment raving about the "belladonna" whom he had heard, and told us that he had been introduced to her and received at her "byjove" (bijou) villa at Hammersmith. Of course he was fair game for the



subalterns, but he retorted upon one of them once by calling him "a grinning bamboo, quite a paratoo." The most delicious story of his dates back to the Crimea; when returning to camp after a visit to Kamiesch, the French port, he told us that the "cafes" were full of "chasers of Africa" (Chasseurs d'Afrique).

The routine and working of large prisons, such as Chatham, was a signal proof of what careful organisation will produce when long and steadily applied. The management and control of 1,700 convicts of all categories, the profitable application of their labour, their safe keeping, under conditions little akin to the common idea of a prison, the maintenance of good order among them, with due attention to their rights and privileges, cannot be attained very easily. In all these matters the Chatham organisation was perfect. Everything worked with clock-like precision; the worst that could be said was that it was too mechanical, the inmates were treated too much *en masse*, with no attempt at distinguishing between them. They were as one in the eyes of authority, a single entity, ground under the hard and fast rules of the prison system. The wheels went on and on, round and round, with ceaseless, methodic movement, and everyone must conform, and either fall out or be crushed; the happiest were those who allowed themselves to be carried along without protest or hesitation, adapting themselves automatically to the monotonous movement.

The day began early; the first bell to rouse out the convicts was at 5.30 a.m., and the first order was to fold hammocks, sweep and arrange cells, and "put out your brooms," a simple method of calling the roll. Only human agency could slip the brooms from the inside to the outside (the doors were cut short to allow of this), and where there was no broom there could be no one in the cell; he must be absent (escaped), or dead, or at least unable to move. Breakfast followed, and another ingenious device prevented thefts when issuing the food. A convict walking backwards carried the tray with both hands, and the warder coming afterwards served the allowance of bread and cocoa or bread



and gruel. By 7 a.m. the whole congregation was collected in chapel for a short service in accordance with the Act of Parliament, and preparatory to turning out to labour. I shall never forget those church parades in the dull grey light of wintertide, or the early sunshine of summer, when the sparrows twittered a lively accompaniment to the gruesome chorus of so many hundreds of unfortunates expiating their offences against the law. Our chaplains had a very curious taste in music. One, my very good friend, long afterwards chaplain at a Riviera health resort, leant towards Gregorian chants, like the present Pope of Rome. At Chatham, I can still recall that "Oh, be joyful!" and "Now let us lift our cheerful voices" were great favourites, although hardly suited to the poor fellows who nevertheless sang so lustily. Many of them took a pardonable pride in their performance. "What will become of the singing in my part of the chapel?" asked one, when he became a "blue dress," or special class convict, which obliged him to change his seat. On the other hand it is a well-known fact that convicts have been known to sing ribald songs under shelter of the many voices intoning around.

One of us Deputy-Governors, my colleague or myself, invariably attended morning chapel, having first paraded the warders going on duty. Every alternate week a call bell rang in my bedroom betimes, a little before 6 a.m., for I liked to turn out well dressed and clean shaven, knowing I had to inspect and possibly check slovenliness in my subordinates. From chapel all hands marched into the yard on their way to "the Island"; the working parties were formed under their respective officers, who proceeded to open the ranks and search every man singly and minutely, the object being to guard against the taking out of tools or disguises, or food accumulated to eat in concealment, and thus facilitate escapes. As an additional precaution, one whole party, selected without warning, was marched to the bath house, where every man was stripped to the skin, and his clothes were thoroughly examined. At the same time the cells occupied by these men were subjected to a very rigorous examination, so that the possibility of successful concealment

was very small. There was one case of ill luck that overtook a convict. He went to the bath-room with his party, taken at haphazard, and was detected wearing a full suit of flannels, manufactured surreptitiously by him out of his "cleaning rags," the waste stuff given him to keep his cell in order. The infinite pains and ingenuity he had devoted to his work were worthy of a Trenck or of a Latude. In another case at Chatham the same device was tried with perfect success. The intending fugitive disappeared for a moment behind a brick stack, threw off his prison dress, and walked off in the opposite direction unchallenged, having all the outward appearance of a "free labourer," of whom several were at all times employed on the works. I shall have occasion to speak again about convict ingenuity and skill in contrivances to compass escape.

The marching out to labour was an imposing ceremony, in which the Chief Warder appeared in great force, for although one of us Deputy-Governors attended the parade as in duty bound, "the Chief" was practically the principal person present. The whole strength, valid and fit for duty, defiled before him. There was a backward issue from the prison direct upon "the Island," an exit scrupulously barred and bolted on the outside, but on these occasions the keys were brought round from the main gate in front. Each warder in turn took his party past the chief, marching in the rear (the inviolable rule obtained that a warder was never to allow a convict to get behind him), and as he passed he called out its distinguishing number and strength, "Number twenty-seven party, seventeen men, sir," and so on in quick succession. Each officer was strictly responsible for his quota, and was required to bring them back, dead or alive, at the return from labour, when the cry was the same, with the addition, if necessary, "One or more sent in." The phrase meant that the original total had been reduced by withdrawal; a man might be "sent in" to the prison, under escort of course, to "receive a visit" from his friends, "under report" for refusing to labour—a not uncommon offence—or he might "complain sick," or in the extreme case the man might be missing because he had escaped. In all



this the question of personal custody, if I may so call it, was kept constantly in view. Durance was not limited to encircling walls, it was extended and enlarged into the open imprisonment of being under the watchful eye and unrelaxing control of the warder in actual charge, and with an outer line of sentries beyond. The ample and really daring application of this idea has produced notable results. Many imposing monuments are in existence to-day to bear witness to the wisdom of the system. Great public works have been created by it that might never otherwise have been undertaken, and must in any case have been executed with greatly enhanced expenditure. Portland Breakwater, the extension of the dockyards at Chatham and Portsmouth, the reclamation at Dartmoor, the construction at Borstal of the forts covering Chatham, are the most notable of these.

The Deputy-Governor was the last person to leave the now nearly empty prison, and he followed on in the rear of the convicts as they made their way in lengthy lines, winding in and out to their various centres of industry, remote and far. Some went to the uttermost limits of St. Mary's Island, where they were engaged in battling with the tidal Medway, driving and filling in a dam behind which brick and stone retaining walls were built; others dropped down into the great basins, of extensive acreage, that were being excavated in the black, tenacious mud of the lower depths of the island. Long rows of trucks, filled high with the filthy, treacherous stuff, were hauled up by steam power and run on to the "tips" to be thrown down to manufacture firm ground. A large party was distributed through the brick fields, preparing "kerf," or brick clay, wheeling it to the brick-making machines, and carrying the green bricks to the drying "hacks," and bearing them when dry to the kilns. There was an artisans' yard for skilled handicraftsmen, carpenters, and smiths, wheelwrights and fitters; a stone yard for scappling and dressing the stone forwarded from the convict quarries at Portland; and with all these a strong brigade of single workers, "special" convicts, "blue dress men," of exemplary conduct, who were within a year of release on "ticket," and who could be



trusted to go about, even beyond the sentries, alone and unguarded. It was a busy scene on every side, a scene of incessant, often arduous, and painfully harassing toil, exactly described by the expression penal servitude, or enforced labour, imposed upon those who had forfeited the right to go free and use their thews and sinews on their own account.

The recall bell rang out before noon, when work ceased instantly, as if by a loosened spring, tools were collected carefully and counted, and locked up in the tool shed, or chained together, so as to guard against their improper use. Men scraped the dirty, tenacious clay from their smock frocks and heavy highlows, they fell in by parties with a listless air of great fatigue, and were marched homewards, retracing their steps, and repeating the morning's method by a reversed process. The Chief Warder was there waiting to take the tally again; the prisoners were minutely searched, and were at last permitted to re-enter their cells, where dinner, such as it was—for in those days the diet was undoubtedly meagre—was served without delay, and the absolute mid-day rest of an hour or more might be enjoyed. At this precious time "reports" were heard, requests and applications made, and interviews accorded by the Governor in person, or one of his deputies. I have told already of the difficulties that met me in my first discharge of this duty, but by now I was pretty well up in the business, and could readily enough solve most problems put to me.

One-thirty saw us again upon "the Island," the same Deputy-Governor, and it was an excellent system that the bulk of the day's work should fall on one on alternate days or weeks, so as to allow the other almost perfect freedom in the afternoon. We greatly prized this relief, for the work was often trying and monotonous beyond measure. The authorities indulgently recognised this, and it was the invariable rule to allow each Deputy-Governor one clear day off duty a week, with no obligation to remain within reach, so that a trip to London, and the softening influence of society, visits and parties, and idle hours passed at the club made an agreeable

contrast to convict keeping under a harsh, unlovely *régime*. For my part I can never be too thankful that I had cultivated artistic tastes, so far as to give me some technical facility. I could find plenty of subjects around, even among the grim scenes of "the Island". landscape, and so far profited by my leisure and opportunities as to produce work that was often successfully exhibited, and sometimes found a sale, even at the Royal Academy and elsewhere.

If the day began early, it ended so; the evening recall, governed, of course, by the season, but even in high summer never later than five, released half the staff. The return from labour was an exact repetition of the march in for dinner, except that the weariness was more marked, and the convicts were glad to regain their cells, cheerless and solitary though they were, to which they must be condemned for the ensuing twelve hours. The strict rule of separation prevailed, and was rarely broken, but bathing was in progress most nights, and all were let out in turn to be marched in parties to the bath house. When "teas" or "suppers" had been served, a modicum of bread and cocoa or tea, the day was practically ended, and the prison was handed over to rest and silence. The last, however, could not be enforced absolutely. Talking from cell to cell, and especially in those of older construction, where the partitions were of corrugated iron, was a very common practice, and defied the correction of the night patrols—officers who tramped noiselessly to and fro, with cloth coverings over their boots.

## CHAPTER XIII.

AT CHATHAM CONVICT PRISON (*continued*).

Severity of the Prison Discipline—A Convict who would not Work—Prison Diet—Its Insufficiency and Monotony at Chatham—Self-mutilations—The Warders Sketched—Corporal Punishment—The Prisoners—Old Acquaintances Among them—Other "Gentlemen Gaol Birds."

I HAVE said that I made two attempts to return to the army, being consumed with regrets for my old profession. The desire was heightened by dislike for the service I had entered. It was both disappointing and depressing. I had been, no doubt, spoiled by the positions I had held and the functions I had discharged, for the most part higher than my age and rank warranted, and certainly far more varied and interesting than the dull round of prison duty; a mere subaltern, filling a very minor place, with no power and less authority, although my responsibility pressed heavily on me at times, and there was much that I would have put my hand to if permitted or encouraged. The condition of the prisoners was by no means pleasing, the treatment of them left much to be desired, and I would gladly have seen it ameliorated. There was much that called for reform. The severe discipline, even to one trained to see it enforced strictly, seemed to me to go too far and to verge upon cruelty; punishment was inflicted continually on the same offenders, who only grew more hardened and recklessly defiant.

The commonest form of misconduct was "refusing to labour," an offence which had its origin generally in a crooked disposition or a sudden fit of temper, not seldom in that disinclination to work which is at the root of so much crime. An easy billet or a "soft job" was the Mecca to which all eyes were turned. It was the rule to allow



prisoners to apply, or "put their names down," for any particular party that pleased them, and the list was honestly worked through, all being taken in regular rotation. The favourite party of all was that engaged in the filling of cement bags, really a very irksome and arduous employment; carried on in clouds of dust, in a close atmosphere. But it called for no strenuous effort, it was under cover, and it carried full marks. "Light labour," on the other hand, as some special forms of stone-breaking, brick cleaning, rag and wool sorting were called, meant reduced marks, and inability to earn remission. Even with this inevitable forfeiture before them, the doctor, who alone could select for light labour, was pestered with applications for these parties.

In regard to the obstinate refusals to put a hand to the plough, I may mention one case of long-sustained persistency that cannot, I think, be paralleled. I do not exactly remember the conditions under which it began, but I know it lasted through the whole of the remainder of the convict's sentence. Smith, as I will call him, although this was not his real name, "turned up" one day; in other words, refused to labour on the works, and was "sent in." His punishment for this, the first offence, was light. He was "admonished," no more; then came a fresh offence, a fresh report, and further punishment, increasing, of course, with the repetition of the crime. There was naturally a limit to the amount of dietary stoppages. The limitation of food to simple bread and water must be recognised, and Smith got weaker and weaker, until he could no longer be certified fit for dietary punishment. It became necessary to dose and feed him up, and when he had gained strength he was reasoned with earnestly by Chaplain, Governor, and all of us, to change his ways. Not he! Directly he returned to the works he stood out from his party, and refused to labour as before. It was *da capo* again and again; on his side flat disobedience, on the other inexorable authority. All kinds of devices were tried to win him over; among the rest he was sent out to the works handcuffed, and made to stand for hours looking on, but he still stubbornly refused to join

in. Of course, he lost all his "remission," and completed his whole sentence, but when the time came for his release he could still flatter himself that he had beaten his masters.

Penal servitude, as carried out at Chatham, for the most part implied some very severe forms of bodily labour. The worst, no doubt, was the filling of trucks with moist, black clay, down in the deep excavations for the basins. The labour was fixed and continuous, correctly measured as to the cubical amount to be raised, and the time in which it was to be done, for the string of trucks came down empty, and went up filled, at intervals exactly calculated. The toil was accentuated by the competition among parties working near each other, or rather, of their warders in charge. No one liked to have his men outdone, and the warders often pressed them in a way to deserve the epithets vented upon them, *sotto voce*, of taskmaster and slave driver. To show how bitterly the convicts suffered at times under the uncompromising severity of their masters, I may be permitted to quote here some rather pathetic doggerel, picked up on the works:—

*Lines written by a Convict, 642, W. B., on*

ASSISTANT WARDER S., a "Tight Master."

Convicts, beneath these Churchyard stones,  
Lie the blood and bones  
Of Samuelson. Who tyrannised for love of pelf  
Over the lives of better men than himself.  
But, convicts, now be of good cheer  
For he can't act the tyrant over you here.  
He must at the Judgment seat appear  
When Satan shall exclaim with great glee,  
Come, thou bloody tyrant, come with me.  
Thus shall Satan to Samuelson say,  
I've longed for you this many a day,  
For the lives of men you have took away.  
There was Saltmarch, Wilson, and Dignam you slew,  
For not doing work they could not do,  
Thou bloody tyrant.  
Thus shall Satan say and grin,  
Taking Samuelson by the chin,  
Saying, Come, thou mortal lump of clay,  
Thou tyrant, thou hast had thy day  
Now I—



I must confess that I was greatly pained and impressed by much that I saw around me. I could not help commiserating the convicts, yet I was powerless to mitigate their sufferings. The prison system of those days cannot be well defended. It was rigorous and relentless, formed by men who thought most of deterrence by enforcing a rigid, almost barbarous, rule, from which all solace and alleviation was scrupulously eliminated. It may be contended that the way of transgressors is, and ought, to be, hard, but there is a great difference between the harsh measures then in force and the extravagance into which the ultra-humanitarians, chiefly beyond the Atlantic, have been led, the social evenings, the abundant supply of toothsome food sent in from outside, including wines and cigars of good brands, which obviously tend to make a farce of justly-inflicted penalties. But there was no light in the lot of the Chatham convicts, no horizon to which they could look for coming relief; all around was flat, stale, and unprofitable, a dull, monotonous round of iron, unchangeable routine, with little or no sympathy for them. The rare visits of friends and dear ones served only to emphasise the prevailing loneliness in the midst of a crowd. No creature comforts, no ease, no treats, hardly the gratification to the palate of a sufficiency of food. Since those days the question of diet has been often raised, and in many ways; in the Press, in Parliament, and on Committees appointed for the purpose. Although for short terms it is still little better than starvation—and it may be urged that short imprisonment may be made irksome in no other way—prison fare is ample enough for long sentences, and especially in the case of convicts undergoing penal servitude, a fact proved by the unanswerable logic of incomplete consumption. When a prisoner returns food uneaten, we may be perfectly sure he has not gone short, and I have found this constantly the case with the improved and increased rations.

Everyone knows that to be steadily, constantly restricted, and for years and years, to an unvarying and not too appetising diet, becomes almost unbearable. Although this is recognised in prison diet by some changes in its com-



position during the week, still, when soup precedes pudding, and pudding meat every two or three days, prepared always in the same fashion, and having invariably the same flavour, the food becomes almost nauseous, and the palate of even the hungriest man craves with almost maddening desire for a change. I have seen men at Chatham greedily devour the railway grease used in the traffic of the trucks. There was a horrible fashion once of eating earth, with serious results to the unnatural feeders. It was given in evidence before a Royal Commission (Lord Kimberley's) by Mr. Davitt that a convict in a neighbouring cell at Dartmoor ate grass, candles, the dubbing issued to grease the heavy boots. Mr. Davitt declared that he had himself eaten candles when goaded by the pangs of hunger. The practice of candle eating was said to be common, convicts liked to stir their gruel or cocoa with one and drink the greasy compound, which was found attractive, especially in wintry weather. One story was that a convict would collect earthworms on the works, and eat them in handfuls with a sprinkling of salt. Another was in the habit of filling his pockets with young frogs alive, and swallowed them in rapid succession on the appearance of a stranger.

My own experiences did not go so far as the foregoing. It was a common practice for prisoners to "complain sick," putting forward imaginary ills, simply to get a different taste in their mouths, if they could only seem sick enough to be given medicine. There were, indeed so many of these applications that a hospital nurse attended at the interviews with the surgeons, provided with two great jars of medicine, specially compounded to dispose of these malingerers. "Number one," cried the surgeon. "Put your tongue out," echoed the nurse, and with a spatula he would lay on a great slice of some pasty substance, which was swallowed without protest, not seldom with manifest relish. "Number two" would be some species of uninviting black draught. Some forms of medicine that are not too generally approved of, such as cod liver oil, were considered great luxuries, and there were many convicts who would gladly swallow any quantity.

Whether or not directly traceable to the harsh conditions under which they lived—and upon this point I will not venture a decided opinion—there was a lamentable frequency of self-caused injuries among the convicts on the works. For some time the practice might be styled endemic; the motive has been variously attributed to abject despair, the reckless desire to end a life of misery, and to deliberate craft, aiming at a long and recuperative detention in the comparative ease of the hospital. Probably both causes were at work in a greater or less degree, but the fact remains that self-mutilations, for which many opportunities were afforded, were of continual occurrence. One day a convict would rush from his party, and, before he could be caught, deliberately lay his legs on the rails immediately in front of a line of running trucks. Another day the scene would be the “tip,” where the truck-loads of clay were delivered at high speed, to be stopped abruptly by a little barrier, and so emptied. A convict flogged the draught horse into a gallop, and at a given point drew him quickly off the track, releasing the small iron plug that held the back-board in its place. Here was an automatic Juggernaut, quite uncontrollable; it must run its course, and here was opportunity for the doggedly determined executant. This persistence in self-mutilation, which was not entirely confined to Chatham, caused considerable distress among the authorities, who would have gladly put an end to it. Steps were taken to improve the material well-being of the convicts, but not on a very liberal scale. There was a certain small change in the daily rations, and from that time dates the issue of the brown woollen jersey, a kind of “sweater,” that gave substantial protection against the often bitterly severe weather and the icy winds that blew in the estuary of the Medway.

Even a most unobservant man must have been struck by the many interesting and varied types of character to be found within such a curious microcosm as a great convict prison. The warders, as a class, no doubt, presented a certain family likeness; they were for the most part the product of the kind of discipline under which they had been brought up. They had mostly graduated in either



navy or army, had learnt that obedience was a first duty, and to exact it from others a second, of at least equal importance. Almost invariably they were brusque and abrupt in manner, seemingly unsympathetic, and little given to weakness, as they would have deemed it; to gentle and conciliatory treatment of their charges. They would have both scouted and dreaded that, as tending to lessen their authority, and as laying them open to serious censure from above, over-much familiarity with a prisoner being a positive offence, implying unfitness, and, still worse, suggesting those intimate relations that paved the way to trafficking in money and tobacco. There are black sheep in every flock, but, taking them as a whole, the warders at Chatham were honest, upright men, well meaning, hard working, very moderately paid servants of the State, and I look back upon them, after my long association with them, with respect and a most friendly feeling.

I may give a word or two here to some of them, the most distinct and individual examples. I have spoken at some length of X., the Chief Warder. Next to him came the "principals." C. was a survivor of the old days, who had begun his service in the hulks on the river, and who had been a witness of the famous Chatham mutiny of 1861, caused by a too sudden reduction of the diet, and checked, if not entirely quelled, by the promptitude of a high official, Captain Gambier, then a Director of Prisons, who went into the thick of the menacing throng and knocked the ring-leader down with his own hands. C. was up to every trick of the prisoners. R. had held high rank as a non-commissioned officer in a Highland regiment. He had marked personal ascendancy over his charges, and a powerful, resonant voice. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than to manœuvre his command when collected, some three to four hundred convicts, to march into or out of prison. He had done good service, and was an excellent disciplinarian, but he was a true type of the old illiterate soldier, who had never learned to speak accurately, or give things their correct appellations. To the last he used the misnomer, so common among soldiers, given to the 2nd Queen's



(now the West Surreys), who are invariably called the "secondy Queen's" or "Second of Queen's." W. was principal warder of the hospital, an ex-guardsman, tied and bound with red-tape, ever insisting upon the punctilious observance of the rules for tidiness. Woe to the patient, however ill, who allowed his bedclothes to be untidy, or failed to arrange his sheet in a perfectly straight line under his chin.

M. was the principal in charge of the separate cells, the place of penitence, where all punishments were inflicted. It was his duty to issue the tiny loaves of the bread and water allowance, to remove beds, to see to the imposition of handcuffs, ordinary and "figure of eight," the body belts, and other appliances to check violence; to superintend the riveting on of the leg irons, when ordered as a penalty for assaults or attempted escapes. He was the master of the ceremonies at the infliction of corporal punishment, which took place in the yard attached to the separate cells. He saw to the adjustment of the triangle, and produced the dreadful "cat," with its nine tails, and the great red seal on the handle that warranted it an official weapon. M.'s duties brought him constantly in touch with the worst prisoners, and he was for ever concerned with the administration of the severe penalties in force, and it was more than enough to sour his nature and harden his heart. But he was really a kindly soul, who discharged his unpleasant functions with compunction, and more than once desired to be relieved of them. He never dared, however, to question their wisdom or necessity, and looked upon himself as an impersonal agent, mechanically enforcing the fiats of his responsible superiors.

B. was another and more active agent of authority. He had been a boatswain's mate in the Royal Navy, where he had learned to flog, and the prison authorities willingly utilised his skill in handling the cat. B. was a short, squat, thick-set man, with the rolling gait of a sailor, and immense physical strength, which, added to his skill, made a very loathsome exhibition of the wretched culprits who were tied up.

Of all the ameliorations introduced into our prison system, and they have been many and marked, none, perhaps, is more commendable than the restriction placed upon the award of corporal punishment, and the comparative rarity with which it is now inflicted. I cannot agree with those who advocate its entire abolition, for the power to inflict it enters, I think, into the *ultima ratio* of discipline. Cases may arise which can only be met and settled by a word and a blow; authority must be able to appeal to some short, sharp, even brutal reprisals, when peace and good order are seriously threatened by the turbulence generally latent in a prison, and always liable to overflow. Where mutiny and combined insubordination are possible, and might lead to most deplorable results, drastic measures of repression and coercion are indispensable. If there were no lash it might some day be necessary to use the bullet; but it should be reserved for extreme cases. To quell and prevent the recurrence of a rising, it may become imperative to make an example of the ringleaders; but for the ordinary current misconduct of individuals correction can be imposed without resorting to corporal punishment. This has been fully recognised in the existing *régime*, and the orders now in force, which insist upon the intervention and approval of outside authorities, are an excellent check upon too zealous disciplinarians.

There were some quaint characters among the Chatham warders. The principal gate-keeper, Mr. Jeremiah J——, a tall, lanky, cynical old gentleman, had passed years in the same routine, issuing keys to all officials when they entered the prison, and scrupulously exacting their return when they left it. Except on the daily exits and returns to "the Island" works, every single soul passed in under his eye. He examined and searched every vehicle, even the butcher's and the baker's carts, lest they should bring in clandestine supplies of tobacco. He was still more inquisitive with outgoing vehicles, which naturally offered dangerous facilities for escape, and I am convinced that had Jeremiah J—— suffered anyone to pass him, he would have died of shame and remorse. Escapes did occur,



but always from the works, and not seldom were followed by the recapture of the fugitive, who would be brought in through the main gate. I remember Jerry on one occasion solemnly and sententiously addressing a convict who had failed, with the words, "Here to-day, gone to-morrow, and back again the next day; was it worth all the trouble?"

Old G.—or "Father G."—was another character, who performed many peculiar duties, and was quite an institution in the place. He attended the visits, and when he appeared upon the works eager expectation prevailed among those who were entitled to see their friends, and hoped that they were wanted now. Father G. always escorted to the station every prisoner when discharged direct, not through the intervention of an Aid Society. He was permanently employed within the prison as bathman, and was responsible for the proper temperature of the water. I have seen him disputing with some man about to make the plunge, who complained that the water was too hot or too cold. Father G. would take a stick, and put it into the water, and, drawing it out, give his decision with calm insistence, as though he had felt it with his hand. But the prisoners were fond of Father G., who was always of equable temper, and seldom, if ever, reported them.

As all the world knows, every class of the community may be from time to time represented in the prison population. Persons of title, by courtesy or in their own right, men who have enjoyed means in a high position, officers of the army and navy, ex-members of the Civil Service, clergymen, doctors, solicitors, bankers—all these have been included in the social wreckage engulfed in the vortex, to be cast up eventually upon the dark, dark, dread shore. I have met all kinds of people, all sorts and conditions of men, in gaol. One of the earliest and most unpleasant cases of a gentleman gone astray came upon me like a shock, for I had, at one time, known him intimately. He was one of a draft of new arrivals paraded before me, whose names it was my duty to call over before signing the "body receipt." His was an uncommon name, and when he answered to it I recognised immediately



Captain X., of the —th, whose acquaintance I had made years before in Montreal, and whom I had last seen when sharing a cabin with him on board a homeward-bound liner. He had given no indication of that weak moral sense that was to land him one day in a convict prison. His evil propensities were latent, and he was much esteemed as a good-natured, easy-going young man, very dandified in dress, vain of his appearance, although he was red-haired, white faced, and prematurely stout, the result of a strong *penchant* for the pleasures of the table; he was generally popular, a cheery companion, hospitably inclined, with a not uncommon bent towards extravagance, with its consequences, a burthen of debt.

His falling away was due to his forging a cheque upon his father to meet a pressing claim from his bootmaker, who prosecuted him when the fraudulent signature was discovered, and a sentence of penal servitude followed. When I saw him, a seedy, shambling figure, thin and wasted, his once smooth, placid face lined and battered, he was but a sorry, painful phantom of his former self. The smart clothes of old days, the frock coat with the velvet collar, his snowy waistcoat and bright-hued tie had degenerated into the hideous prison dress, the smock-frock of faded blue and purple-striped "drabbit" stuff; the tight knickerbockers of khaki cloth made him look knock-kneed, his small pointed cap was dragged down over his head like a night cap. X. must have suffered bitter pangs from this abject and humiliating dress. The desire to make the most of his appearance presented itself as the time for his release approached. It so happened that three years later he was sent up for discharge to Millbank, where I was then in charge, and on making my daily round, I passed the door of the cell he occupied. Something tempted me to look in on him through the "inspection plate," or small spy hole, that enabled anyone outside to look in unperceived. I saw X. busily engaged in skimming the grease off the surface of the soup just issued to him for dinner, and he was applying this pomatum to oil his scanty red locks.

X. did all his time at Chatham, and was a curious

illustration of the rapid decadence of a man when he has once gone wrong. He was a very troublesome prisoner, idle, insubordinate, contemptuous, recalcitrant, hating all authority. A curious development in his character was his preference for the society, when he could get it, of the worst and the most hardened habitual criminals. At the Sunday exercise, when, under the old rule, convicts were permitted to walk in the yard two and two, X. always selected an old hand for his companion. He scorned the society of men who, like himself, had seen better days, who were well educated and, in a sense, well bred. No doubt he was pleased with the deference shown him, for it is a strange fact that class distinctions are preserved even in a prison, and he was always "Captain X." to his associates of lower rank. Personal vanity was united in him with consuming desire for self-glorification. I do not believe that in those dark days he possessed one sixpence of his own; yet in a letter out, to write which he obtained special permission—for by his repeated misconduct he had forfeited such privileges—he set forth his testamentary dispositions elaborately, with a wealth of imagination, if not of actual means. The letter was addressed to a distinguished officer, in the suite of a Royal Prince, whom he treated as a familiar friend of his and his family. He dealt at great length with broad estates and town mansions, and gilt-edged investments for vast amounts, and ignored the previous impecuniosity that drove him to forge a cheque for five or ten pounds. X. was, no doubt, a prey to overmastering ideas of grandeur, and might well have been certified as a lunatic suffering from megalomania.

Much later I renewed my acquaintance with another ex-officer whom I had known in former days, and who had at one time been a member of my own club. This convict, Y., reproduced many of the characteristics of X. His crime had been analogous, but had been carried further, and he had worked on larger lines; he had added fraud and misrepresentation to forgery, and had been sentenced more than once to lengthy terms. He was cleverer, more astute, more pertinacious in his antagonism to authority, and, for a time at least, more successful. He gained early release on



medical grounds—the doctors certified that further imprisonment would shorten his life,\* and he went out a perfect wreck, to return, a year or so later, with a fresh sentence, now completely restored to health. He was a man of full habit, inclining indeed to corpulency, but he had wasted to a skeleton while in prison, and through his unshaken strength of will in denying himself more than the barest minimum of food. On his second and third visits he was not permitted to repeat these tactics, but he always managed to “fetch the farm”—the convict slang for getting round the doctors, and securing admission to hospital.

All “gentlemen gaol birds,” if I may use the term, were not quite of the same kidney as X. and Y. Many make the best of their miserable situation, and accept its trials bravely. Of course, imprisonment bears heavily on the more refined and cultured class. But it is all but impossible, even if it were advisable, to differentiate between various categories. The administrative difficulties might be overcome, but there remains the injustice of meting out different punishments for the same offences, and the authorities would be ever open to the charge of favouritism.

Among the sturdy spirits who did their bit bravely to the last was one patient, unassuming creature who had been once a field officer in the Army, in a position of authority, had, under strong temptation, embezzled trust funds, and had forfeited everything, reputation, rank, the bread of those who depended upon him. He was an exemplary prisoner, for whom most of us were extremely sorry. I see him now, pale, emaciated, dejected, always with down-cast eyes.

I remember the captain of a Yankee clipper, sentenced for the manslaughter of one of his crew, a tall, sturdy, self-reliant, laborious convict, who never murmured, looked always good-tempered, wore his drab suit and knickerbockers as jauntily as if it were the most honourable uniform. He submitted himself with a cheerful alacrity to discipline, and

\* An amusing story may be inserted here of a prison doctor who recommended the release of a “lifer” on the plea that the man’s health was so precarious that he could not possibly live to complete his sentence.



was never, to my knowledge, reported for misconduct. On his release he resumed his old position, I believe, none the worse for his enforced withdrawal into privacy. Another who took his punishment well had been a provincial merchant, and was a meek, inoffensive creature, grateful for any kindness, gladly performing any office, however menial, and overflowing with gratitude for his selection as a prison-cleaner. There was in my time an Italian convict, a mild-mannered, docile creature, who did his share of labour uncomplainingly, vying with his more robust comrades, and never repining at his sentence, which I have a strong suspicion was undeserved. A mystery hung about him. I have good reason to believe that he had been made the victim of the revengeful feelings of some Secret Society with which he had been affiliated, and which he had offended or betrayed. He did his "time" without protest, and never more than vaguely hinted that he had been entrapped upon some specious, cleverly-concocted false charge.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## FENIAN PRISONERS AT CHATHAM.

Troublesome Charges—Arrival of Pardons—Making Arrangements for Deportation  
—Escorting the Prisoners to Liverpool—A Ludicrous Mistake by the Liverpool  
Police—O'Donovan Rossa's Account of the Release.

THERE was a special class of prisoners at Chatham in my time, the so-called "treason-felony" convicts, or Fenians, who had been sentenced to penal servitude for attempting to wage war against the State. It may be remembered that they gave a great deal of trouble, resisting authority in every way, exhibiting their intractable dispositions in various overt and insulting acts which cannot well be detailed here. They had many sympathisers and friends in the outside world, and a special Parliamentary enquiry had been made into their alleged grievances. They complained of being harshly and unjustly treated, and the Government in power so far acknowledged the justice of their complaints as to yield almost entirely to their demands. The concessions made extended to a special diet, immunity from labour, detention in a separate part of the prison, with continual access to a private yard for exercise, unlimited communication with, and visits from, their friends. The wife of one of these, indeed, came to reside in the immediate neighbourhood, and when she could not see her husband she wrote him frequent and interminable letters. It was the duty of the Deputy-Governors to peruse all incoming and outgoing letters, and we heartily condemned her fluent pen. It was necessary to take special precautions for the safe custody of these prisoners, extra warders were continually on the watch, and one way and another we were highly delighted to hear that they were to be speedily pardoned and released.

One morning a senior official arrived from London with these pardons in a bag, made out under the Great Seal

of Ireland, on voluminous parchment, to which was appended a large circular lump of wax. Release was conditional on their consenting to leave the United Kingdom forthwith, and giving an engagement not to return. All except Halpin accepted the terms without demur, and all alike selected the United States as the country they proposed to honour with their future residence. As the Government (Mr. Gladstone's) was anxious to complete the business quickly I was sent up to London to secure passages, and arrange for their safe conveyance from Chatham to Liverpool. This was Thursday afternoon, the best Atlantic steamers sailed on Saturday, so there was no time to be lost.

By the time I reached town the day was over, and I found the Cunard office shut. So I despatched a commissioner to the Cunard agent's private address, which I found in a directory, and went on myself to Euston, to arrange for the reception and transit of my party. There was no secret made of this approaching release, and there were fears, not ungrounded, of some demonstration *en route*. It would have been very awkward to encounter a great crowd at the station, whether of idlers or sympathisers, for my instructions were on no account to lose my prisoners, and at the same time to use no force in retaining them. The railway authorities were, however, most obliging and helpful; my omnibusful, on arrival from Victoria, was to be driven straight into a private yard, the prisoners were to be passed thence into a private waiting-room, and so into a reserved compartment of the Liverpool express. Returning to Victoria I made similar arrangements with the London, Chatham and Dover superintendent, who also promised to provide a large private omnibus sufficient for my whole party.

Returning now to meet my commissioner, who was to come to me at my club, I heard to my dismay that he had been unable to find the Cunard agent. The family had left their last address, and moved somewhere into the country, and the place was not known at their last residence. I could, of course, have waited till the office opened next morning, but that would have made me very late, as I



was due back at Chatham at noon to take over my party and get through to Liverpool that night. So I sent off the commissionaire again with orders to inquire at every house in Inverness Terrace, which the agent had just left, for any news of him or his new address. By great good luck he came upon a footman who was "keeping company" with one of the maids of the agent's household, and knew all about it. The family had moved to Bromley, in Kent, address so-and-so, and I was there before breakfast next morning, very much to the agent's surprise and amusement. I think before he could attend to business he had a laugh with his wife over the means by which I had obtained their address. But when I explained the object of my early visit he raised the first great difficulty I had encountered. He doubted whether the Cunard Company would care to take the Fenians as passengers; and possibly the United States Government would not allow them to land in New York. I used such arguments as occurred to me, pointing out that most, if not the whole, of the prisoners were naturalised Americans, and could not be denied domicile; that they would all be perfectly presentable and well-behaved. All he would promise was a telegram, to meet me at Chatham, with the decision of his directors as soon as he could see them. This, I am glad to say, was satisfactory.

I was back at Chatham at the hour appointed. Everything was ready. The steward's department had done wonders in providing outfits within the twenty-four hours, and I found my five Fenians appparelled (by their own particular choice) in full suits of shining black, with soft felt hats, and having rather the appearance of undertaker's men starting for a "black job" somewhere at a distance. Each carried in his hand a small black leather valise, containing a few articles and necessities for the voyage. The warders who were to accompany me as escort were all in plain clothes. Then I was entrusted with the pardons, which filled a good-sized hand-bag; also a considerable sum in cash, for every man was to receive five sovereigns with his pardon, when actually embarked and on the way, and we set forth on our journey.

Everything fell out happily and smoothly as far as Liverpool. On entering the train at Chatham, in which the ex-prisoners and three warders occupied a second-class carriage, myself and another warder a first-class carriage adjoining, I handed in a number of newspapers and my cigar-case to the Fenians, which put them at once in right good humour. They had neither smoked nor read newspapers for many a long day, and from their grateful acknowledgments I knew I should have no trouble, unless it was from outside influence. I may add that the cigar case and its contents had been bought with this express purpose, as I was not at that time a smoker.

All my plans, the journey to London, the transit across from station to station, the departure from Euston, went off without a hitch. I had followed my omnibus through the traffic in a hansom, close behind, keeping a watchful eye on my charges, and was rewarded by being told by one of the Irish-Americans that I reminded him very much of Napoleon, and that I ought to be commanding armies instead of looking after convicts—a very pretty bit of blarney.

The only *contretemps* that occurred in the trip was on arrival at Liverpool. We had taken the precaution to telegraph the chief constable to expect us, to provide a conveyance, a large omnibus—I was particularly anxious to keep my party together—and a sufficient force of police to assist, if it should be necessary. When our train ran in to the Lime Street platform none of my party moved till the crowd of passengers had cleared away. Then, with much caution and circumspection, wondering whether there would be any demonstration or disturbance, for Liverpool was full of Fenian sympathisers, I stepped out of my carriage, and beckoned to my warders to follow, whereupon the whole five of us were taken into custody by the Liverpool police! I was hurried, vainly protesting, to a cab, where I found myself seated between two constables, who, without listening to what I had to say, tried hard to keep me quiet. I was assured that I was all right, and that no harm was intended, it was only a measure of precaution. I do not



know to this day how we eventually escaped from this ridiculous position. I think it was the sight of our five Fenians pacing the platform alone and unattended, looking rather uncomfortable, and just like prisoners unexpectedly at large, who did not quite know what to do with their liberty, that brought home to the Liverpool police officers the absurd error into which they had fallen. Fortunately, my Fenians asked nothing better than to be recaptured, and there was not a soul left in the station but ourselves. Very soon, split up into several small parties, each in a cab, we were transferred to Prince's landing stage, where a steam-tug was waiting to take us on board the s.s. *Cuba*.

My task was not completed when I touched the deck of the Atlantic liner. Many anxious hours intervened before I was finally rid of my charge, during which, if so disposed, they might have given me a great deal of trouble. To tide over a portion of the time, the purser kindly suggested supper, and the Fenians, fresh from spare prison diet, sat down to a plentiful repast, served with all the liberality of the good old Cunard Company. After that my charges were allotted to state-rooms and went to bed, while I and my principal warder organised a night-watch, and perhaps for the first and last time a Cunarder echoed the whispered counter-sign from our patrol, "Five men. All correct, sir," just as if its gangawys were the corridors of a convict prison. Towards morning a few Irish friends came alongside with offerings of food, thinking the Fenians would need it on the voyage; but they retired on finding the poor exiles were provided with first-class passages, and likely to live on the fat of the land. Then, by degrees, passengers and baggage, more of each, began to come on board; there were the usual preparations for departure, the anchor was atrip, the donkey engine active, the steam-whistle blew repeatedly, and presently the engines gave a big throb, the great screw revolved once or twice, and the *Cuba* made her way slowly down the Mersey.

Now the Fenians came below one by one. I read over the conditions of pardon, handed them their parchments and their cash, took their receipts, and said good-bye. Rossa,



who called me "governor" up to the last, insisted on shaking hands; and all seemed genuinely grateful, as well as full of elation at their release.

For a moment the great ship paused on her way; I went over the side with the agent, my warders, and one or two specially favoured persons, and we returned to Liverpool. For a time I was conscious of a trick I had learnt only within the last few hours, of looking over my shoulder to see if my charges were there, and I was told I did just what police officers do when responsible for important prisoners. This was the single occasion on which I was actually in such a position, and I was not sorry when the duty had ended. I should add that Halpin did not linger long after his comrades. The loneliness of Chatham prison overcame his scruples as to the terms of pardon, and he accepted them unconditionally. He was sent down singly to Liverpool, and he, with others released from Portland, avoided the good offices of the Liverpool police by leaving the train a station short of the city, whence they drove all the way to the wharf.

O'Donovan Rossa has published his own account of the liberation of the Fenian convicts, which does not exactly tally with mine. He is good enough to say that the "Deputy"—meaning the writer of these pages—"now that he wasn't a gaoler, was a very amiable gentleman. He made himself as agreeable as possible, and telegraphed to have everything ready before him as he went along. Detectives were here, there, and everywhere that we made a stop or changed cars or coaches." My arrangements I have already described. They certainly did not include detectives, nor did I seek the assistance of the police, except that of Liverpool, which failed me in the way described. O'Donovan Rossa says that when he left the railway train "one kind friend kindly gave me his arm, and his kindness was imitated by another, who saw I had another arm to spare." If the police-officers did escort the Fenians to the cabs in waiting it was not till after they had released me and my warders, and at my request, seeing that my charges were patrolling the platform as free men.

## CHAPTER XV.

## AT MILLBANK PENITENTIARY.

Military Prisoners at Millbank—The Régime in the Seventies—The Crank—"Shot Drill"—The Treadwheel: its Good and Bad Points—The Story of Millbank Penitentiary—The Transportation System—The Penitentiary Described—A Ludicrous Incident in the Governor's Office—A Labyrinthian Interior—The Nightly Round—Contrasts—Intractability of Female Prisoners—Their Violence and Profanity—The Story of "Miss Newman"—An Epidemic of Door Rattling—A Surprise Visit and What Came of it—Other Episodes in the Governor's Office at Millbank—Recollections of the Tichborne Claimant.

TOWARDS the end of 1872, after some three years' service in a "public works" convict prison, I was transferred to the "close" prison of Millbank in the same capacity of Deputy-Governor. The famous old penitentiary of Millbank, built originally under the auspices of John Howard, and of which I shall have more to say, was at that time the receptacle of three very distinct and different classes of prisoners. There were penal servitude convicts of both sexes doing "separates," the first probationary period of nine months, a modified form of solitary confinement; and the third category was made up of military prisoners, soldiers under sentence of court-martial for lengthy terms, extending from six months to two years. There had been a recent administrative change, by which the military authorities had abdicated their right to inflict the most serious disciplinary penalties in favour of the purely civil department charged with the correction of crime. True, the Inspector-General of Military Prisons, who exercised supreme control, was, and had been for years, an officer of the Royal Engineers, but mainly that he might supervise the construction of the buildings to be used as military prisons, and not in any sense to carry out the system of imprisonment. In the early seventies much dissatisfaction prevailed with the methods of enforcing



penalties inflicted upon soldiers; they were thought to fail in deterrence through overmuch leniency, and it was keenly desired to tighten the strings. With this idea military prisoners were handed over to a power most practised and competent to deal with offences against the law, and for years soldiers who offended against the military code were brought under the same rules of repression and coercion as ordinary commonplace criminals.

There were some six hundred of them collected at Millbank, subjected to discipline altogether unsuited to their condition, and tending to lessen their use as members of a combatant profession. The treatment of a man who is still a soldier was calculated to injure his physique, to affect his health injudiciously by starvation diet, to degrade him by throwing him into almost actual association with the dregs of society and by clothing him in a garb of shame, and, worse than all, it robbed him of his acquired skill and military knowledge of drill, and the facility in handling his weapons. Thirty years passed before wiser counsels prevailed to alter all this. To-day the soldier-prisoner loses his liberty, but he retains his uniform, and, to a certain extent, his self-respect; he is not allowed to deteriorate in physique, to grow soft and weak in muscle, to become white and etiolated, more fit for hospital than for return to duty and to perform sentry-go; he is drilled daily, and exercised and developed in strength, his employment is always in some useful profitable trade, but secondary to his professional training. I am glad to think that I was to some extent contributory to this improvement, having been a member of the departmental committee which sat in 1899, under the presidency of Sir Redvers Buller, and which strongly recommended it.\*

\* A prominent member of the Committee was the late Colonel M. Garsia C.B., the then Inspector-General of Military Prisons, who was, indeed, the pioneer and originator of the more intelligent system now in force. The following extract from the report of the Prison Commissioners of 1902-3 pays a well-deserved tribute to this excellent public official. "He (Colonel Garsia) was entrusted of late years with the administration of military prisons, and this gave him the opportunity—of which he availed himself to the utmost—of



When I went to Millbank in 1873 the military prisoners were, except for a small difference in dress, indistinguishable from their civil comrades. Their diet was similar; they were kept isolated in separate cells the whole twenty-four hours save for a short spell of exercise and a still shorter visit to the chapel. Their work was principally oakum picking, varied with the hard labour of grinding air at the "crank," the devilish invention of some ingenious but, happily for himself, nameless tormentor; or at "shot drill," another fiendish practice of old standing, much favoured by early and little enlightened prison authorities.

A word or two more about such peculiar contrivances before they pass entirely out of cognisance in the limbo that awaits such inhuman devices.\* The "crank" was a wheel set against cogs that exercised a resisting pressure, and turned by a handle weighted at will to fix the amount of effort required to make the revolution. Apart from the humiliating sensation of labouring hard to achieve no sort of result, the process was to be condemned as inflicting the most unequal toil, for these cranks were of very imperfect construction, continually out of order, so that the precise amount of work to be done could never be exactly calculated. "Shot drill" was the last survival of those barbarous personal punishments by which a century ago military discipline was maintained, such as the "gantrey" or wooden horse, picketing and tying up by the thumbs, and, to a much later date, "the cat o' nine tails." The present generation has probably all but forgotten "shot drill," and, as it will be unknown to my younger readers, I may describe it here.

remodelling and bringing up to a very high state of efficiency . . . the military prison system, both at home and abroad. He had the satisfaction before his death of seeing his views accepted and his policy inaugurated, and also of feeling that his public work was appreciated and recognised by all with whom he was brought in contact."

The control of military prisons has been now assumed by the War Office, the post of Inspector-General has been abolished, and Major R. A. Henderson administers them with the rank of Inspector.

\* Report of Dr. Gover on Hard Labour of the First Class, dated 4th July, 1848.

It was an extremely simple, but at the same time most irksome and laborious, task of lifting and carrying a twenty-four-pound shot to and fro over a distance of six paces. The men at this exercise stood singly in a circle at that interval, the shot resting on the ground between the feet. At the word of command each man stooped, lifted the shot waist high, marched forward, deposited it, faced about and returned to his former post, where he found a fresh shot awaiting him, left by the man moving immediately behind him; and the same process was repeated *ad nauseam*. It went on, with no intermission, for four hours, with only a halt of five minutes every half hour to rest the strained and tortured muscles. The practice was painfully exhausting, but was supposed to do no harm physically except by predisposing to rupture, yet mentally its wearisome monotony was maddening. Shot drill was in use in some of the local (county or borough) gaols\* when these were taken over by the State in 1878, but it was promptly abolished by Viscount Cross, then Home Secretary. It was retained rather later in military prisons.

The treadmill, now happily a thing of the past, did not exist in Millbank, nor was it to be seen in any of the convict prisons. I never came across it until I became an Inspector under the Prisons Act of 1877, and found it a flourishing and time-honoured institution in the local prisons. There was a simplicity and directness about the mechanical process that commended it to the old school of disciplinarians, whose main idea was, in common parlance, to "make it hot" for all who came under the rigors of the law. To force a man, willy-nilly, to climb the everlasting wheel—and climb he must or fall off—to perpetually lift his body up three feet at a time, was the very easiest way of inflicting the penalty of hard labour. It was brute force automatically applied, a labour-exacting and, at the same time, expense-saving machine. A very small staff of warders was required, there was no outlay of material beyond the first installation of plant. In many places the treadmill, like

\* Chester, Lancaster, Durham, Oxford, and Bedford Prisons.



the crank, only ground "air," but in others the power was utilised in raising water from a well or grinding wheat into flour for home consumption. The earnings per man were trifling, and there were objections, not entirely sentimental, to this punishment, so often stigmatised as brutal and inhuman. It demanded extreme caution on the part of the prison surgeon to guard against passing, as fit for the wheel, men with weak hearts or other defective organs, and cases were not unknown where such men had been carelessly put to the labour. Although public opinion more and more forcibly condemned treadwheels, they were still favoured by the Prison Commissioners, the governing body that took over the administration of all prisons in 1878, and many new machines were erected in the succeeding years under their auspices.

The Commissioners were fortified in this by the advice they sought and obtained. Thus, in a report furnished by Dr. Gover, in 1879, that esteemed scientist went so far as to claim for the treadwheel "the great merit of not only being an instrument recognised as the one best adapted for utilising the power of a man, but it is also the only simple machine in which a number of men can be made to work together with a certainty of each man doing his specified share of the work. It is a machine at which there can be no shirking, notwithstanding what is said about the ease of distinguishing 'old hands' from novices by the mode of moving the feet."

And again he says: "The treadwheel appears to be generally considered by engineers to be the most successful application of human force, as a force; that is to say, that a man working at the treadwheel applies his labour to the best advantage; but for purposes of utility too large a proportion of the labour is devoted to moving the treadwheel. It should be explained that at the treadwheel the man does not use the muscles of his arms to assist in lifting his weight; he merely steadies himself with his hands, and the arms do not directly produce any work in the sense of lifting any portion of the weight of the body. The work is done by the legs, and is equivalent to raising through the space



travelled by the circumference of the wheel the whole of the body weight which is not supported by the arms and hands resting on the hand rail."

Criticising the foregoing, two other eminent scientists called in, Drs. Guy and G. W. Hastings, declared their opinion that the treadwheel was the best method of attaining uniformity in enforcing hard labour of the first class; it was "the most exact in its operation and the least capable of evasion." Absolute uniformity they thought impossible so long as men differ in size, weight, strength, physical endurance and health. Still, in the simplicity of the treadwheel they saw a great merit, and thought it would be well to retain it.

The system was not finally abolished until 1895, and only then in the teeth of vigorous protests of its many still ardent champions.

One incident in connection with the treadwheel has its humorous side, and may be recounted here. A great Church Congress assembled one year at York, and some of its members, mostly bishops, were taken to see York Castle, with its fine mediæval remains of Clifford's Tower. The prison within the ancient walls also possessed some interest, as it had been built under the auspices of that eminent divine, Sydney Smith, who was at the time an influential member of the Yorkshire magistracy. Some £10,000 had been expended on the boundary walls alone, and altogether the prison, which could accommodate no more than 166 prisoners, in cells that could not be occupied for any length of time, cost upwards of £100,000.

There was a treadwheel at York when the bishops visited it, and being of an enquiring turn of mind, they desired to have practical experience of the severity of the labour. The prisoners were accordingly removed and the bishops took their place, with the result that they unanimously condemned the wheel as a barbarous instrument. It was said that the sight of a dozen or more pairs of black-gaitered legs ascending the cruel staircase was one not to be easily or soon forgotten.

I have told elsewhere and at length the story of the Millbank Penitentiary,\* that ancient pile now swept away to give place to the Tate Gallery, with its fine collection of modern art treasures, and I may here explain how I came to enter upon the task of writing a book about it. Soon after I took up my duties at the prison I made an accidental discovery. Immediately behind my chair in the Deputy-Governor's office was a door securely fastened, and, being of an inquisitive nature, I was curious to know what lay beyond. The keys were brought, and I was admitted to an inner receptacle, chaotically filled with ancient books and faded manuscripts, the whole under a deep layer of London dust which could not have been disturbed for years. I could obtain no very definite answer as to the precise nature of these documents, and with all the ardour of a book-lover, who has spent many delightful hours rummaging among the treasures of the second-hand bookstalls up and down the world, I proceeded to taste and test them for myself. It was a great *trouvaille*. Here, lying quite neglected and forgotten, were the whole of the Penitentiary papers: original journals, diaries, and detailed proceedings of managers and officers, architects' plans and proposals, first estimates of cost, long statements of actual expenditure. There were many volumes of blue books, a whole Parliamentary literature on prison affairs, Commissions, and enquiries, reports upon prison discipline, upon the system of transportation beyond the seas, and the appalling results that followed it. There were first editions of John Howard's great quarto tomes on the state of prisons, and of Neild's later survey, and whole stacks of correspondence.

I had no difficulty in obtaining permission to use this great mass of interesting matter, and the more I read, the more I desired to utilise what I found. About this time it was suggested to me by Colonel Du Cane, the head of our department, that a brief account of the legislative changes introduced into prison management would make a good article, and, on tackling it, I found abundant material in my

\* "Memorials of Millbank and Chapters in Prison History." Chapman and Hall. 1884.



"find" for a more ambitious literary effort. "The Memorials of Millbank" was the result. The basis of the work was laid in the records and archives I had found in my hand, and I had recourse to other authorities, drawing, of course, on that mine of wealth, the British Museum, and greatly aided by my presence on the spot I was describing, and by the generous advice and help of the veterans by whom I was surrounded.

The great experiment in reformatory processes at Millbank was carried on for seven-and-twenty years with unstinted effort and almost unlimited means. This point deserves to be emphasised, for the question is one of continual recrudescence, and people are apt to forget, or have never known, how ample and earnest an experiment was made at Millbank to reform offenders. To give it every chance of success the persons subjected to treatment were carefully selected, drawn from the following categories:—Quite youthful offenders convicted for the first time, and those who from "early habits and good character, or from having friends or relations to receive them at discharge, afford reasonable hope of being restored to society corrected and reclaimed by the punishment they have received." The treatment was most humane, the intentions were excellent; kindness was the guiding principle, concession, consideration, persuasion and admonition were always preferred to coercion, even at the expense of good order, and the maintenance of the salutary discipline which ought to be inseparable from a place of durance.

It is a well-known axiom in prison management that unless a tight hand is kept on the reins the prison team is difficult to drive, unmanageable even, and there is constant danger that the coach will be overturned. The driving was of the weakest at Millbank, and the double thong was never used. The well-meant experiment, so ambitious in its inception, and carried out so extravagantly, with an expenditure that was almost unlimited, was proved at length to be an acknowledged failure. This abortive attempt to correct and remove the obstinate canker of crime by mild methods remains as an object lesson to



those who still believe in its efficacy. People have mostly grown wiser to-day, and the weight of public opinion is in favour of dealing with the patients at an earlier stage. Child rescue, the removal of the quite young from evil surroundings, and their treatment in industrial and reformatory schools are measures of proved beneficial results. They have cut off at one end the supply that so long regularly recruited the criminal army, while at the other the prolonged detention of the recidivist or habitual criminal, which must ere long be established by law, will appreciably diminish the mischievous misuse of freedom.

At the moment when Millbank was finally and unhesitatingly condemned as a failure, the Government was peremptorily summoned to revise completely the whole system of secondary punishment. Transportation beyond the seas had proved a gigantic failure, slowly but undoubtedly realised as such by its chief champions and promoters. Every outlet for the disposal of convicted criminals was closed or condemned. The Colonies now would have none of them; the hulks, which had been largely employed of late years, were full of grave defects; the Penitentiary was an absolute failure. Yet a determined effort was made to maintain transportation. Surely it was premature to abandon it when great areas of waste land lay unoccupied, or were but newly or partially settled, awaiting development. The most progressive of these, Tasmania or Van Diemen's Land, was therefore selected to form a great oversea convict establishment, by which the main idea of transportation was still held in view, that of giving offenders a new chance in a new field. But a better system of management was projected. Van Diemen's Land made no difficulty, as had New South Wales; indeed, it was a Crown Colony, pliant, submissive, obedient to orders. So it was now to be filled up with felons in various stages, all tending towards gradual improvement. Vast numbers were first to be kept to hard labour in the chief towns, then to be transferred to out stations in various forms of emancipation, and at last released to labour at large, to settle upon and reclaim the back lands. The net result, however, was that the

whole island would be swamped, soaked, inundated, entirely permeated with the criminal class, and in the end the total number interned about equalled that of the honest free population.

A new principle was followed, that of progressive treatment, by which the convicts were passed through stages of diminishing rigour as time went on and their conduct justified it. These were called periods of probation, and consisted chiefly of penal detention in Hobart Town, transfer to labour gangs in the country, conditional freedom on a "day" pass, longer ticket-of-leave, until the concession of free pardon was finally reached. Millbank was chosen to be the basis or starting point of the new system; every individual was detained there and watched as in a general dépôt for nine or ten months, during which his fitness for removal beyond seas was carefully gauged, and it could be decided whether he was worthy of the boons awaiting him under another sky. The opportunity offered was not available long, for this probation system did not survive the trials and difficulties that surmounted it, and the rapid accumulation of the worst elements of humanity in one spot, where they ran riot and set law at defiance, soon imperatively called for change. We reached thus, practically by exhaustion, the latest practice, to be shortly altered, by which the detention in separate confinement for terms that have grown shorter and shorter became the rule, followed by forced labour at home, penal establishments at Gibraltar or Bermuda, and finally conditional release on licence or ticket-of-leave. The system at Millbank, when I joined that prison in 1873, was an integral part of this, and it survived with various modifications till the old Penitentiary disappeared.

The extent and intricacy of these buildings was extraordinary. The confusion of mind that beset a new-comer will be best understood by a brief description of the interior plan. The Penitentiary greatly resembled a star fort, a series of six salient five-sided bastions or pentagons thrown out from a common centre, and built each upon the side of a central hexagon. The architect's aim had been to construct six perfectly separate and



independent prisons, cut off each from each, three storeys high, the windows all looking into the central yard, the outer walls blind faces of brickwork, the staircase in three towers placed at the outward angles of the pentagon. These towers had doors into the yard, and also outward beyond the building, the other communications being at the junctions where the inner sides of the two pentagons adjoining met at the hexagon, and on three floors. In the heart of all, the centre and omphalos of the whole system, was the chapel, a circular building within the hexagon. It will be readily understood that the whole of this complicated interior formed a labyrinth of bricks and mortar, of iron gates and railings and barred doors—a perfect maze, to which familiarity was the only key. The area covered was estimated at about seven acres, and beyond the buildings was an outer space, included within the octagonal boundary wall, also of about seven acres. A part of this was once occupied by a moat, afterwards filled up, and in this there was a disused graveyard in which the victims of the epidemic were buried.

In the Governor's office at Millbank, a long, narrow chamber, situated just above the inner gate, there hung over the fireplace a large map or ground plan of the prison, on a considerable scale. In this, the "Board Room," as it was still styled in memory of the many distinguished Committees which had formerly managed the place, the Governor in my time gave audience to his charges, listened to their complaints, and administered justice. Two doors at the far end, right and left, communicated with the prison, and through one of these the prisoners were brought in under escort to appear before the Chief. I was a witness once of an amusing incident in this Board Room. One day a prisoner who had misconducted himself, when invited to speak in his defence, stooped down quickly, and taking off his shoe, launched it at the Governor's head. Whereupon the warder on one side of the culprit drew his staff and knocked the other warder down. The tableau has never been forgotten by me: I can see them still, the Governor indignant and much perturbed, the warders rescuing their prostrate



comrade, the prisoner, and, I am ashamed to say, myself convulsed with laughter.

The mention of the map has led me into this digression, and I must add here the curious practice, religiously observed whenever a prisoner was introduced into the Board Room, of drawing down a curtain over the plan. It was the messenger's first duty, and it was the intention to prevent anyone from learning his way about the place. The secret was jealously guarded indeed, but yet it was quite unnecessary; the sharpest eyes and the keenest intelligence could not have mastered the intricacies of the Millbank labyrinth with anything less than a week's patient study. For my own part I entirely sympathised with the old warder who did not possess the bump of locality, and who, to the last, was obliged to adopt a plan akin to Fair Rosamund's skein of wool in guiding her through the maze, or to the backwoodsman's, who "blazes" or cuts notches in the trees as he threads an unknown forest. This warder was in the habit of making landmarks with a piece of chalk, without which he would have been hopelessly lost. So was I for the first few weeks' residence, and it was only by taking thought and working out the lie of the land geometrically that I could master all the twists and turns, and could "find myself" when making my course.

My worst trial with the intricacies of this rambling structure was at night when I went my rounds, never earlier than 11 p.m. The night guard of the prison was entrusted to a certain number of officers with allotted beats. One patrolled each pentagon, into which he was locked, with orders to keep constantly on the move round and round the wards, and up and down the passages; it was my duty to find him, speak to him, and see that he was awake and alert. My pass key admitted me anywhere, and as soon as I had passed through the outer and inner gates after rousing the janitors, I entered the first pentagon by the nearest door, and proceeded to hunt for the patrol officer. It was often a wearisome matter. The floors were shut off one from the other, and my only course was to walk him down; if I was lucky I might meet him; if the reverse I might follow at his

heels along the three floors, hearing nothing, for his footsteps were noiseless, deadened by the "sneaks," or cloth slippers, worn to conceal his whereabouts. In such a case I halted, and became a fixed point at one of the tower staircases, where the patrol was sure to meet me, sooner or later, provided only that he had not retired into some quiet, retired corner, and, unperceived by me as I passed along, was soundly asleep. When I had waited long enough for a man to make a complete tour of the pentagon and no one appeared, I rang up the "orderly officer," the principal warder in general charge for the night, and we proceeded in company to search for the missing patrol. When he was found asleep he was roused to an uncomfortable sense of his neglect of duty, and spent the rest of the night calculating the penalty of fine or dismissal that was likely to overtake him next day.

The same misfortune seldom overtook me in more than one pentagon, but there were six in all, and I never completed my round in less than a couple of hours. I had still to get home to my rooms in Claverton Street, and later in the Buckingham Palace Road, of course on foot, for the lonely neighbourhood of Millbank was not the place to find a hansom in the small hours of the morning. It was a strange experience, that night visitation. The inside of Millbank, dark, dreary, silent, yet peopled with hundreds of fallen beings, whose evil thoughts were stifled in sleep, was in strong contrast to the scene I had just quitted, club or drawing-room, "Rag," Garrick, or theatre, the cheery company and social gathering, the light and laughter, the pretty surroundings, all within a mile or two of the great caravanserai of crime. When I penetrated this silent world it was difficult to realise that I had crossed almost at a step from joy to sorrow, from the pleasant things of life to misery and suffering. The feeling did not pass when I issued once more into the air, for the locality was full of gruesome associations. How high the hopes of the philanthropic theorists who had reared this great pile, how hollow and disappointing the outcome, how little the most persistent and most hopeful scheme had effected! Just



opposite, on the riverside, were the Millbank stairs, which had been trodden by thousands beginning the dread pilgrimage that was to end in the infamy of Norfolk Island and the debasing cruelty of the chain gangs of Port Arthur.

My prison experiences were greatly widened at Millbank, for there I was brought into close contact for the first time with those "kittle cattle," the female prisoners. Wise men will freely admit that the management of the softer sex by the stronger presents peculiar, it may be insuperable, difficulties, but these are enormously accentuated when the moral sense has been weakened and the women have lapsed into evil ways. I forbear to enter into any psychological enquiry into the causes or reasons, but will merely state the facts drawn from my own experience, that the female "side" of a prison gives more trouble to the authorities than the male. It has been officially recognised nowadays that the most effective government is that exercised by a doctor; so many questions of hyper-emotional temperament, of hysteria, of peculiar physical conditions arise, that the chief official in every large prison to-day is invariably a medical man. Had this principle been adopted earlier, prison records would have exhibited fewer cases of aggravated and persistent feminine misconduct, resisting all disciplinary methods, and driving the harassed and perplexed prison officials to distraction and despair.

The intractability of the female candidates for reformation was painfully shown in the very earliest days of the penitentiary. The first batch of women received were found to be suffering from fits, imaginary as it proved. The affliction promptly disappeared when the Governor stated that the best treatment was to shave and blister the heads of all who were attacked. But a number who refused positively to have their hair cut were removed to the hulks. The female prisoners were fanciful about their food, refused to eat brown bread, and raised an uproar in chapel, chanting "Give us our daily bread." The slackness of supervision resulted in the most reprehensible form of correspondence and intrigue between the males and the females, and at that period, it must be remembered female officers had been



but little employed; the first matron at Millbank was the first who had ever been appointed to such a post. The poor creature little knew the task she had undertaken, and was soon terrorised by her reckless charges, who repeatedly assaulted and maltreated her, and on one occasion she narrowly escaped with her life, only saved thanks to the timely rescue of a wardswoman, or well-conducted female prisoner. Violent outbreaks were of continual occurrence in the female pentagon, and once a conspiracy was discovered, carried on by the circulation of a mysterious bag, which was thrown down in the exercising yard, to be picked up and passed on from hand to hand, so that its seditious contents might be read, and the plot extended. Its avowed aim was to murder the chaplain, the matron, and a well-hated female officer; but, as usual, the secret was betrayed, for, as I have had occasion to remark before, there is no fidelity to each other among prisoners, and mutinous combinations never succeed.

No respect was shown by the women for sacred things, or the sacred office of the chaplain. One of them one day jumped up in the middle of divine service and cried, "Mr. Russell, Mr. Russell, as this is the last time I shall be at chapel, allow me to return thanks for favours received." On another occasion screams and huzzahs were heard among the female congregation, and a number of prayer books were thrown at the chaplain's head. When he had finished his sermon with the accustomed "Let us pray," a voice was heard crying, "No, no, we have had praying enough." The condition of the females was at its worst during the Chaplain-Governor's reign. He constantly deplores in his journals "the behaviour of the female pentagon is frightfully disorderly." "Bickering, bad feeling, disputes are increasing." "Great laxity prevails, no discipline, no attempt to enforce non-intercourse . . . although to the ladies who visit them (disciples of the estimable Mrs. Fry) the females quote Scripture and speak piously . . . their minds remain in a state at once the most depraved and hypocritical."

Some of the women who exhausted the patience of their

keepers in old Millbank were no doubt prototypes, emphasised and exaggerated, of a class with which all prison officials are familiar nowadays. I have been constantly reminded of cases of an earlier date, when I have had to deal with grave misconduct in the prisoners under my charge; I have noted how the fits of savage, almost maniacal fury, are exactly recurrent, how the same long protracted, obstinate defiance was shown in old times, the persistent "breaking out,"\* the fights and quarrels with one another, the savage assaults on the female warders. The entries in old Millbank records are the same precisely as those of a later date, only much more numerous, and the misconduct accentuated.

I will here reproduce the prison history of one woman, evilly famous in her time, who attracted much public attention, whose doings were discussed in Parliament, and in a Select Committee of the House of Lords. For a year or more she ran her wild course at Millbank, intractable and untameable to the last, when she was transported to the Antipodes, and passed out of sight. She was called Julia St. Clair Newman, or by common consent, Miss Newman, in concession to her supposed gentle birth and superior education, and she had been sent to Millbank for "reform," after a career of swindling and fraud. She was a West Indian, and had come to England with her mother to live on a small allowance insufficient for their needs, and they fell into bad ways. Julia is described as a ladylike woman, under thirty, of prepossessing appearance, of florid complexion, full figure, and, as she presently showed, of extraordinary physical strength. She had many accomplishments; she could draw and paint, was very musical, and had a fine voice. She was clever, designing, and thoroughly unprincipled. From the moment she entered the Penitentiary she set the whole place by the ears, exhibiting a

\* The meaning of this term is no doubt generally known, but I may explain that to break out is to demolish cell furniture, smash windows, destroy and tear into ribbons every vestige of personal clothing, bedding, sheets, blankets, accompanied by barricading the cell door and the most strident and offensive language.



tenacious and ingenious perversity that soon became an intolerable nuisance to the whole establishment, alike to warders, doctors, Chaplain-Governor, and Committee.

The first trouble was caused by a set resolve to write letters secretly to her mother, and she possessed herself of the materials by some occult means. When deprived of them she flew into a paroxysm of rage, then she feigned madness, in which she was detected, and when reasoned with by the Governor she threw a can of gruel over him. After this she was relegated to the dark cell, where she sang songs of her own composition, "too regular and too much studied for the productions of a madwoman." The question of her sanity was the subject of much anxious enquiry, during which she acted her part admirably, but without deceiving the authorities; it was said of her that she "is uniformly ungovernable, she constantly disturbs the quiet of the prison with her wild yells and furious actions, foremost among the latter, attempts to take her own life, blackening her own eyes, and beating herself on the cell floor." To curb her violence the surgeon devised a special strait-waistcoat, but she was no sooner placed in it than she released herself and tore it to ribbons. No means of restraint would hold her. A strong strait-waistcoat was slashed to ribbons, and it was found she had secreted a pair of scissors under her arm. Not strangely, she was a terror to the whole place.

"No wonder," records the Governor, "that a person of her strength, violence, and mental superiority, continued with reckless determination and obstinacy, should inspire these terrors." It was idle to try punishment; the means of coercion were limited to relegation to the "dark" cell and a strict diet of bread and water. Her example was fatal to the discipline of the prison. The Governor was in despair. She was triumphant, for after each fresh dose of punishment she had to be taken into hospital, and was nursed back to strength with arrowroot and similar niceties, to begin a fresh series of outrages in violation of authority. He begged that she might be sent elsewhere, pleading that "all prisoners whose insubordinate spirit does not yield to the ordinary



method of treatment should be removed . . . the moral injury they do to the residue by long-continued examples of rebellion is incalculable."

At last, wearied of the fight, the medical authorities consented to certify her as insane, and she was transferred to Bethlehem. But they knew too much at the asylum, and, soon penetrating the imposture, gave a decided opinion that she was not, and never had been, mad. Bethlehem was no place for her, and she went back to the Penitentiary to resume her old courses. It was the same old story, the same acts of insubordination again aggravated by feigned suicides, and successful combat with every fresh attempt at restraint. Again and again she conquered. Handcuffs, an especially small pair for her slender wrists, were useless, so was pinioning her arms with strong tape; she was tied to a bedstead with strong webbing, but got out of it. The surgical instrument makers invented a new kind of waist-belt combined with handcuffs, but all to no purpose. At last she was fastened to the wall by a chain passed through a ring and padlocked. "This security was of short duration; before morning she had slipped through the chain. It was again placed upon her in a more effectual manner, under instead of outside . . . As she had destroyed so much of her bedding, I ordered her to have no more bedclothes . . . when she heard this she frightened the female officers with the frightful and horrible imprecations she uttered." Lastly, a pair of leather sleeves were constructed of extra strength, which came up to her shoulders and were strapped across, also strapped round her waist and again below, fastening her hands to her sides, yet in the night she extricated herself from this apparatus, and it was found she had cut it to pieces with a bit of glass. Soon after this the order came for Miss Newman's embarkation, and she was sent across the sea to Van Diemen's Land, where the curtain fell upon her.

The spirit of imitateness is strong in women, and no doubt as potent towards wrongdoing as in other things. The mischief worked by Julia Newman was in the example she set to others. It is strange how quickly the contagion of

misconduct spreads. It is always so, and a curious illustration of this was seen at Millbank not long before I joined there. A female prisoner invented a new form of annoying her keepers. She lay on the floor on the broad of her back and drummed perpetually on the inside of her cell door with the soles of her feet. Her neighbours quickly followed suit, the idea caught on, and the practice was adopted by the whole ward. The cells doors were often badly hung and a little loose. They shook, therefore, and rattled, and the combined noise became deafening! The performers were indefatigable, and kept up the disturbance for hours, day after day, and weeks together. The physical exertion was so severe that the persons engaged became a prey to uncontrollable excitement, amounting to hysteria; they were soaked in perspiration, and lay in great pools of moisture. Shoes and stockings were soon worn away, and the skin was rubbed off, the flesh exposed, and nasty sores were formed. The epidemic, and it was nothing less, lasted for months, then it died away, and revived, and died away again. Nothing checked it until a kind of ankle strap was invented, which confined the lower limbs as handcuffs do the wrists, and the use of a dumb cell, or a cell built within a cell, no sound from which could possibly reach outside. The moral effect of this was remarkable; the fruitlessness of all disturbance entirely checked and took the heart out of the offenders. The dumb or silent cell is universally acknowledged in our modern prisons, and accepted as a potent weapon in maintaining discipline.

A love of bravado, to show off before others, greatly incites the female offenders in durance to resist authority. Weakness in enforcing the rules, yielding too readily to the women's tantrums, and letting them have their own way are soon taken advantage of by the turbulent spirits in a gaol. I had a notable experience of this much later in a northern prison, when H.M. Inspector. The female prison population in the north are a rough, headstrong lot, very difficult to manage, and at that time the Chief Matron was a timid person, who found it pleasanter to give way than to drive, and, of course, the warder staff took their



tone from her. It came out afterwards that it was the custom to let prisoners who should have been in cellular separation collect together in parties of four or more in one of the large workrooms, where they could gossip and idle their time away for hours together, never doing a hand's-turn of work, and thus persistently breaking the regulations. I had my suspicion that the female "side" was in bad order, and at one of my visits (I never gave notice, but dropped down always by surprise) I walked straight to that part of the prison. The warder who answered my bell and opened the door looked flurried at the sight of me, and I passed in quickly, to find the interior in some confusion. There was a scurrying of feet, a jangle of excited voices, and a loud banging of cell doors, clear indications that things were not all right. If I had any doubt, it was removed by the sight of the Matron, who was stooping over a trap-door that gave access to the heating chamber below, and pitifully entreating the women to "Come up, all of you, and be good girls." I guessed what was wrong. The season was winter, and the place below warm and cosy, just where such women would love to linger. There could be no doubt what was happening, and stepping across hastily I added my voice to the Matron's, bidding them peremptorily to "come up."

"Lord save us, it's the Major!" was the affrighted reply. They knew my voice and obeyed, creeping up the stairs one by one, till all, a dozen nearly, stood ranged in a row before me, and I desired the Matron to take their names down, then to lock up each woman in her own cell. Next moment they were off, running for their lives in an entirely opposite direction. With a suddenness that was startling they broke away and made for the staircase, and up it to the top storey of the prison building, above the highest ward, and into the close gallery just under the roof, whence they could reach the skylights and clamber out on to the slates. We knew they had reached the upper air, for their shouts were heard all over the prison, and they could be seen from the yards below, from the neighbouring streets indeed, dancing and performing wild antics on the roof above. We



were all greatly puzzled how to deal with them. Persuasion was futile, and it would be both difficult and dangerous to climb along the sloping roof, seize each woman in turn, and drag her down. After much debate I decided to leave them where they were—a "night out" would cool their blood, and they could neither do nor come to great harm in the alley under the roof, to which they would no doubt return of their own accord.

Meanwhile, I sent to a friendly magistrate hard by, begging him to meet me at the prison next day early, for I wished to have recourse to his powers of punishment, having none myself. I made other preparations to deal with my mutineers, and, passing on to an adjacent town, saw the Governor of the prison there, requisitioned from him all his "figure-of-eight" handcuffs, and carried them back with me next morning in a bag. The situation remained unchanged; the women were still under the roof, but no longer had access to the slates, for by means of a ladder the skylights had been reached and secured from the outside. Then the male officers went upstairs, and, after a sharp scuffle, extracted the women from the alley under the roof, and brought them one by one to their cells. No sooner were they incarcerated than we, the magistrate and I, visited them, and he ordered each woman to be handcuffed, as the law permits when fears are entertained that she will do herself or another a mischief. There was never another outbreak among the female prisoners there.

I have mentioned the "Board Room" at Millbank, where the Governor sat in state, and where he transacted his business, and have told of one amusing incident that occurred there. It was the scene of another episode. The Governor made a point of giving a personal interview to nearly all newly-appointed officers, and I attended, so that we might judge how far they were likely to suit the service. When one of these recent arrivals was shown in, I was rather struck with his voice and demeanour; he was a little too off-hand to please me, he answered the Governor's questions abruptly, and when he was asked if he was married, he fairly forgot himself. "How dare you ask me such a

question?" he cried. "It touches me in my heart, in the most tender place." The Governor, much taken aback, began to explain that he liked his officers to be married, and so forth; but now I interposed and ordered the man to leave the room. "He must be mad," I said. "I thought from the first he had a wild eye, and I did not like his manner." So it was decided to suspend his appointment, and have him examined further, but when I went out to call him in again the fellow had disappeared. He must have wandered off and got lost, no difficult matter for a stranger in Millbank, as I have said, and especially one not quite right in the head. Messengers were despatched to hunt for him, but before they returned, one of the female officers arrived in wild haste, and in a passion of tears made a piteous appeal to the Governor. She implored his protection; she had never been so insulted in all her life. When she became a little calmer she explained that she had met a strange man in the hexagon, who had gone straight down on his knees and asked her to marry him. Of course it was our lunatic at large, and when he was presently captured and brought in, the fugitive declared that he had been anxious to please the Governor, who preferred married officers, so he had proposed to the first lady he met. The man was so obviously mad that he was handed over to the police, and we heard no more of him, except that his appointment was cancelled in due course. The change in his mental condition had, of course, come on after he had passed for the prison service.

I figured personally in another episode in which the "Board Room" played a part, and which I will tell here, although it is somewhat against myself. I was acting as Governor during the absence of my chief on his summer holiday, and was seated in the chair of office one morning, when my messenger brought me in the cards of a couple of callers. One bore the name of Cobbett, the other that of Harding, and the gentlemen soon followed their cards. They carried a legal-looking document, very much like a writ, and were about to serve it on me, when I asked a little abruptly, "What's that thing?" "It's an order from ————"—I



forget the precise formality—"for you to show by what right you detain Roger Tichborne, falsely called Arthur Orton, in custody in this gaol?" I saw, of course, that these were two adherents of the ill-used "nobleman" (at that time beginning his sentence in Millbank), and I am afraid they did not impress me greatly. It was a busy morning, I had double work to do, and I was quite satisfied, holding as we did the "caption" and order of Court, that the convict Orton was legally imprisoned. So, full of my little brief authority, I responded contemptuously, "I do not recognise your right, or anyone's right, except my official superiors, to call me to account in the execution of my duty, or ask me why I keep the Claimant here. But I will tell you this, very plainly, that if you don't clear out pretty quickly, I'll keep you too." Whereupon Messrs. Cobbett and Harding turned tail and hurried out of the prison.

Of course, my conduct was utterly unjustifiable and indefensible, and not strangely the matter did not end there. By-and-by notice of an action at law on the principal point of the illegal detention of the Claimant, but, as a secondary count, that of threatening imprisonment, was served upon the "Governor of Millbank," and my high-handed proceeding laid me open to grave censure. I could only plead guilty, acknowledging my hasty and intemperate words, by which, naturally, I must abide. The case was carried into court, and I was warned by the Treasury Solicitors that I might expect to be sharply cross-examined and reprehended by the judge. Fortunately for me the plaintiffs did not appear, and I was spared the reproof I so richly deserved. But I learned afterwards that both the Judge (Lindley) and the Attorney-General (Bowen) laughed heartily at my summary treatment of such an intricate point as that raised by Orton's staunch friends.

As I have brought the once notorious Arthur Orton in at this place, I may as well complete my reference to him with a few of my personal recollections. It was my strange fortune to come across him almost daily while his long trial was in progress, for on my way to the prison every morning I passed his door in Bessborough Street, and constantly saw



him as he came out to enter his brougham *en route* for the court. He must have known me quite well by sight, and assuredly recognised me when he met me on his arrival in the Reception Ward of Pentagon One. It was my duty to visit him daily and choose the labour to which he should be put—tailoring, in which he soon acquired some skill, and found constant employment in taking in his own clothes. For he lost flesh so fast that it was necessary to provide him with two suits, one for wear while the other was being altered to meet his rapid wastage. I can see him as he bulked large—although he lost nine stone in weight in as many months, he was still sixteen stone when he left Millbank for Dartmoor—a great central figure in his cell, one of the large “angle” double cells, near a junction between two pentagons, seated on the great tub with its lid, that served as a seat in the middle of the place. He was very soft-spoken, very mild-mannered, apologetic rather than deferential, excessively anxious to be polite, but with the air of one who wished to convey that he knew what was due to himself. He clung to the last to his imposture; his choice of books when he was allowed them, was calculated to suggest superior attainments. He fancied French literature, and asked for a Prayer Book (of course, Roman Catholic) in French. Many of our warders firmly believed in him, and quite expected, I think, as he wasted away, that he would some day resolve into the slim, pensive youth in the straw hat and yachting suit of the well-known photograph that was given out as the true presentment of the rightful heir who went down in the *Bella*.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## NOTORIOUS PRISONERS AT MILLEBANK.

"Crutchy" J. and his Inventions—M., "the Devil on Two Sticks"—  
 "Taddy," the Blind Cripple—Margaret Dixblanc—Constance Kent—Emily  
 Laurence, the Jewel Thief—Imbecile Prisoners—Unnatural Appetites—The  
 Persecution Delusion—Megalomaniacs—Religious and Suicidal Lunatics—The  
 Right of Petition—The Process Described—Reflections Suggested by the Beck  
 Case—The Governor and the Chaplains—The Chief Warder.

I HAVE to thank Millbank for a wide acquaintance with distinguished criminals. There was a large collection of them, maintaining the old tradition that one time the inmates included a baronet (*bonâ fide*), two captains, four clergymen, a solicitor, and a couple of doctors of medicine. One of the captains was P——, who had been in a crack cavalry regiment, and who was relegated to Millbank for having struck at Queen Victoria as she was driving out of the gates of Buckingham Palace. Insanity was pleaded in his defence, but not fully proved, and eventually he was released on condition that he emigrated to Australia. I never met "Velvet Ned" in Millbank, the famous cracksmen who "operated" Mr. Walker the watchmaker's shop in Cornhill, and was the hero of many daring and successful burglaries. He was unrivalled in his manipulation of the most improved pattern of safes, the prototype of my friend who came to my assistance at Wormwood Scrubs.\* Nor did I know Seward personally, the original Jim the Penman, whose achievements, much idealised, were the backbone of Sir Charles Young's admirable play of that name. But I met "Crutchy" J., an habitué of Millbank for five and twenty years, who was "doing time" for the fifth or sixth time when I knew him. He was small,

\* See *ante*, page 156.



crippled, but of surprising agility; it was said that he could run as fast as a man with the free use of his limbs, and he could climb like a sailor. He was deemed the best judge of a watch in all the criminal fraternity, and none excelled him in his adroitness in conveying one from his victim's pocket to his own. All his convictions were for stealing watches, another proof of the curious rule that when a thief, or, indeed, any offender, takes to a particular line, he pursues it religiously to the end.

I find I have recorded elsewhere some notable traits in "Crutchy" J. He was really a remarkable man in his way. While at Dartmoor, to which he was transferred from Millbank, he invented an apparatus for cutting turf, which might have been successful, but was never fairly tried. Another of his schemes was a contrivance for raising sunken ships. He had a smattering of education, but he had only learned to read and write indifferently in the prison school. He had the gift of the gab, and was a notorious prison lawyer, who would argue and dilate for hours upon his wrongs and those of his fellow-prisoners. One of his favourite feats when in a punishment cell at Dartmoor was to go through some trial of his at the Old Bailey from end to end. He would mimic the judge's voice, would give the counsel's speeches, and the testimony of the witnesses *in extenso*, and all to the life, to the great amusement of the warders listening outside.

Another Millbank cripple was M., the "Devil on two sticks." He was an expert thief, but especially notorious for his misconduct in prison. He was paralysed in his lower limbs, and if thwarted or out of temper would stick at nothing. He made a desperate attempt to stab the Governor with the sharpened point of one half of a pair of scissors, which he secreted, and meant to use, as he lay in wait at the chapel door. M. poisoned himself, but inadvertently, by taking some belladonna ointment given him for external application only. He had hoped to gain admission to the hospital thereby, but the result was fatal.

I am reminded also of another crippled criminal, who suffered from the infirmity of blindness, whose feats and



failings will be remembered in the Midlands, and especially in Yorkshire. Taddy, as I will call him, was a man of astonishing physical strength, and he constantly practised robbery with violence. His plan was to stand by the wayside, where, with the acute sense of the blind, he could hear if only one pair of feet was approaching, and, sightless and helpless, would piteously appeal to any passing good Samaritan to convoy him across the road. Leaning heavily upon the arm kindly extended to him, he would use his legs cleverly to throw his conductor down, would fall upon him, strike him with his crutch, then rifle his pockets, and hurry away, generally escaping capture. But he was convicted more than once of this dastardly crime, and hence my acquaintance with him in York, Wakefield, Leeds, and other Yorkshire gaols. He travelled further afield too, for I met him once on the high road between Northampton and Leicester, when I was on a driving tour, and pointing for Buxton. Taddy came up to our carriage to beg, as we were slowly ascending a hill, and with I know not what sinister intention in his mind. It was curious to see the malignant look that came over his face when I called him by his name, and told him to be off. He wanted, I think, to attack me with his crutch, but he was satisfied to throw stones after the carriage as we drove away.

Two especially notable female prisoners were employed in the Millbank kitchen in my time; one was Margaret Dixblanc, the other Constance Kent. The first was the cook who murdered her mistress, Madame Riel, in Park Lane, in a fit of ungovernable passion over some small domestic dispute. Dixblanc was a big, beetle-browed woman, who scowled and looked black when addressed, but was quiet and orderly, and gave little trouble; Constance Kent, the heroine of the Road murder, that mysterious butchery which long puzzled the police, and, as some think, was never clearly proved against her, although she confessed the crime. The story is well known of the spell cast over her by religious influences, and how, desiring to make atonement, she was condemned in expiation to wear her life out within four walls. Constance Kent was like a ghost

in Millbank; flitting noiselessly about, mostly invisible, but certainly so when any strange visitor appeared, and she scented the smallest danger of being made a show. She spoke to no one, no one addressed her, the desire to efface herself was always respected, and her name was never mentioned. I visited the kitchen daily, and I must have seen her daily, but I was never conscious of her presence, save as a vague, unreal, almost impalpable personality, that came and went like a flash. It was much the same with other female convicts of the better class whom I used to meet in after years in Aylesbury Prison, and whose names I will not mention. They had a knack of hiding and "going to ground" whenever strange, inquisitive people came peering and prying about.

Criminal women of lesser guilt, but coarser, commoner clay, were not wanting in Millbank, "highflyers" well-known in their generation, such as E—— L——, one of the cleverest and most adroit jewel thieves in the whole calendar. She was a ladylike person of great attractions, and pleasing, fascinating manners, who assumed the title of a fashionable countess, and the most aristocratic airs, drove round in her brougham, and victimised the best tradesmen, swindling them out of thousands for valuables she ordered, obtained, and never returned. Her last offence was for stealing a diamond locket, worth £2,000, and a diamond bracelet worth £600. When arrested another charge was brought home to her of stealing loose diamonds in Paris, to the value of £10,000, and her sentence was for four years. In Millbank she was in a fair way to emulate the feats of Julia Newman, already described, but the discipline was more effective, and she was more easily restrained. It is recorded of this extraordinary woman that, although minutely searched on reception, she contrived to secrete and bring in with her a number of valuable diamonds. A legend long ran in Millbank that she left them in the prison, carefully concealed behind the bricks of a cell wall, and that they were never discovered. I have been assured that the story was so well known in criminal circles that women went so far as to seek conviction and



confinement in Millbank, so that they might prosecute a search for them, using all sorts of cunning devices to become located in the particular cell where the treasure was supposed to lie. It was never found, I believe, not even when the old buildings were razed to the ground to make way for the new edifice. This legend seemed to me to be sufficiently attractive to be worked into a story, and I used it in my novel, "A Prison Princess."\*

At Millbank I first became acquainted with another class of criminal, the imbecile, half-witted and weak-minded, in various stages, all moving towards relegation to the asylum. Many prisoners who, after conviction of crime, exhibited tendencies to insanity, were collected at Millbank in those days. These are, of course, to be distinguished from people found insane on arraignment, and who are ordered to be detained during His Majesty's pleasure. Millbank served for both detention and observation, in cases where the insanity was not accepted as *bonâ fide*, and it was left to the prison surgeon to decide finally upon the individual's state of mind. This involved great trouble and anxiety, and added greatly to the responsibilities of the medical officers, Dr. R. M. Gover, Dr. Nicholson, and Dr. J. P. Wilson. The first-named had had very varied experience, and was of high scientific attainments; he had begun as the Assistant-Surgeon of one of the Woolwich hulks, and rose later to be H.M. Medical Inspector of Prisons, when he acted also as confidential adviser to the Home Secretary in the carrying out of capital sentences. Dr. Nicholson, the senior Assistant-Surgeon, has since gained prominent rank in his profession as an alienist and leading authority on insanity, and is now one of the Lord Chancellor's Visitors in Lunacy. He devoted himself quite early to this special line, and left the prison service to become one of the superintendents of Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum, where he often made me welcome. His talk was always interesting and instructive, for he had given much study and thought to the relations between low mental attributes and crime, and was

\* "A Prison Princess." Cassell & Co., 1884.



one of the first to advance the theory that the law-breaker was not always to be held responsible for his acts. Dr. Wilson also possessed high qualifications, since greatly developed by long and useful service. He is at present Medical Officer at H.M. Prison, Pentonville, the old "model" (for all the world), first erected in 1842, when the Penitentiary was condemned.

It may be interesting to recall some of the types presented by the Millbank imbeciles in my time, types that are pretty constant in our prisons. They comprised all forms of delusion and hallucination; religious mania, exaggerated destructive and homicidal tendencies, curious and most ingenious attempts at suicide, and, not seldom, clever persistently maintained tricks of feigning, ending sometimes in real insanity. Some of the criminals were given to strange vagaries, peculiar, I believe, to prison life, such as the swallowing of pebbles, fragments of blanket, and gutta-percha pint pots. One prisoner I knew contrived, when in the exercising yard, to pick up and swallow pebble after pebble, till he had got down some four pounds of stones. Another preferred blankets, torn into pieces six inches square, and devoured them; a third made short work of a pound of candles if he could get them.\* The very converse of this was to be seen in the obstinate refusal of food because it was supposed to have been tampered with. It had been poisoned, flies had been put into it, everything was adulterated, the bread, potatoes, even the water. One man rejected the milk brought to him because there was a crumb floating on the surface. Another would not touch an egg because there were three spots on the shell. "Why are they there? What is the meaning of it?" was his suspicious inquiry.

To be convinced that they are the victims of persecution and of the determined hostility to their officers was a frequent trait. They were to be subjected to all manner of cruel ill-usage; to be tortured, electrified, have strong lights turned on them to blind them. One man declared that he was

\* Compare with p. 176, where other instances of candle eating are given.

given the toothache deliberately at every meal. Another said that Madame Rachel (then undergoing imprisonment in Millbank), was brought into his cell to take a plaster cast of his head, but the wax was put on so hot that it injured him for life. False accusations were constantly being trumped up against their companions; one man charged another with being a Fenian, next a pickpocket, then a passer of counterfeit coins, then a robber.

Megalomania was strangely prevalent among these criminal lunatics. E. W., for instance, said he was paid £1,000 per diem for looking after the other prisoners. He was King of the Moon, and styled himself "Your Royalty," and kept up great state. S. had power over the sun, and could make it shine on a wet day, he could move the sun any way he pleased, and was always climbing up to the window to see the moon rise. G. D. called himself Prince of Wales, and claimed to be prophet, priest, and king. O. B. had a sister who was Queen of New York. T. R. was so rich that he had to make extra pockets to hold his cash. At one time he was King of Woking, at another Colonel of the Madras Fusiliers, and decreed that Millbank should be sold by auction, whereupon he marked off the lots with a piece of white chalk, and put them up to the hammer in most orthodox fashion of "Any advance? Going! going! gone!" Great inventors were to be found in Millbank. D. B. was gifted with gigantic genius. He had invented a flying machine, and could sail round the moon. T. K. had patented a cork ship which would sink the whole British Fleet, and when our Admiralty refused it, said he would offer it for sale to Prince Bismarck.

Religious mania was a very common form of madness. Prisoners are brought into such close and continuous contact with religious matters, they hear the same expressions, witness the same ceremonies day after day for years, that it is no wonder that when their minds become unhinged, they should be able to rattle off glibly scraps of prayer, scriptural names, texts, and fag ends of hymns. This line was a common one in feigned insanity; to preach and fall down on the knees at all seasons and pray, are phases easily assumed.



The really insane from religious mania are often very quarrelsome; they would argue points of doctrine against each other for hours, and wax angry and fight. Many, again, were gloomy, always in the depths of despair, or unduly exalted, holding their heads high, supremely contemptuous, and superior to everyone else.

I saw many suicidal lunatics at Millbank, but they were too closely watched to have much chance of accomplishing their purpose. The use of the canvas jacket and body belt and association, for they were never left alone, was the best preventive, or, if necessary, they were kept in padded cells, or cells floored and lined throughout with mats. Obstinate refusal of food, and an attempt to die by starvation\* were of common occurrence, always to be overcome by forcible feeding. The secretion of lethal weapons was rendered very difficult by frequent searching and watchful discipline. Homicidal mania, again, never went to the extreme length in Millbank during my time there, no doubt because of the precautions taken. The worst case I came across was in Armley prison, at Leeds, to which I shall refer on a later page.†

I found variety enough in a life that might otherwise have become monotonous with its ceaseless round of routine. My hours at Millbank were easy. First appearance was at 8 a.m. for the parade of officers returning from their breakfast, and then home to my own. On my second visit, at 9.30, I remained all day, alternately till 4 p.m. and 6 p.m., and my duties were chiefly to make the rounds of inspection, and visit all parts of the prison, the pentagons, the yards, kitchen, hospital, and so forth, also to visit one half of the prisoners each day, the other half being seen by the Chief Warder or Governor. They stood in the opening of their cells behind the iron gate, the cell door being thrown back, and anyone who chose might address me with complaint or request. This is the prisoner's right, unfailingly exercised and conceded, while all could also "petition" the Home

\* The extraordinary "hunger strikes" in Siberia did not have their origin in madness, according to the accounts I have read.

† See *post*, p. 326.



Secretary on paper, and, if illiterate, one of the schoolmasters wrote at the petitioner's dictation. It has been suggested in the discussions upon the case of Mr. Adolf Beck, now undergoing investigation, that these "petitions" were a mere farce, that nothing comes of them, that they are not even read by anyone in authority. From my own knowledge of the facts I must strongly dissent from this view, and as the best proof of my contention, I will trace the document from start to finish, from the cell or hall in which it is indited till it returns answered to the prison.

The petition, when written, passes first into the hands of the chaplain, who is charged with all epistolatory business, controls all prisoners' letters "out" and "in," erases all improper matter after consultation with the Governor—and certain subjects are strictly tabooed, such as "news of the day" inward, prison gossip outward. If a petition touches on personal treatment, alleged abuses of any kind, it is accompanied by statements to explain, and, if possible, rebut the charges, and the particular attention of superiors is called to the facts. From the chaplain the petition goes to the Deputy-Governor for perusal, and then direct to headquarters, to the office of the Prison Commission, where it is first examined by a member of the clerical staff, then submitted to one of H.M. Inspectors of Prisons, who minutes his remarks thereon and passes it on to a Prison Commissioner, who sends it "upstairs" to the superior staff of the Home Office, on the first floor. Here it comes under the eyes of several high officials, and if any points of grave doubt or interest are involved, it is referred to the Secretary of State himself. Now the judge who tried the case is called into conference, if there is any reason to fear that there has been any failure or miscarriage of justice. That this is no figure of speech will be understood by the fact that in several cases the royal clemency has been invoked, and a sentence of imprisonment has been curtailed or set aside. The end of the great bulk of petitions, however, is disappointing, and the answer travels back to the petitioner, in almost stereotyped language, that the facts

set forth have been carefully considered—and this can hardly be questioned—"but that the Secretary of State sees no grounds for acceding to the petitioner's prayer." The phrase "no grounds" is but too well known in prisoners' parlance as the downfall of their hopes of release or concessions. The labour entailed in dealing with these petitions has been very greatly increased since it was decided, I think by Mr. Asquith, that every prisoner had the right to be heard whenever he wished to put forward a written complaint, and permission to petition, which had been limited to once yearly, was accorded as often as asked for. I have read as many as fifty daily, when it was a part of my duty to do so at the Home Office.

During the agitation in the Beck case a very general impression prevailed that "petitions" should go much further, and that whenever a prisoner felt that he was the victim of injustice, he should, on stating the fact, be entitled to a new trial. That an appeal should be heard whenever there is any strong presumption of a miscarriage of justice is only fair, but it is well to look the consequences in the face, for if the principal be conceded it will mean the retrial of at least fifty per cent. of the incarcerated. That number of prisoners at least are satisfied in their own minds that they have been wrongfully convicted, and this too when the cases against them are perfectly clear. Of course it is of the most vital importance that not even one innocent person should suffer, but it is a serious concession to admit the possibility of wholesale error in the procedure of our criminal courts. The large majority of convictions are surely the result of fair trial by judge and jury, according to law, and are not to be easily set aside. But while every facility should be given to reopen inquiry in well considered cases, they are few enough when compared with the complaints of injustice that have not the slightest foundation in fact.

Until the winter of 1875 I pursued the even tenor of my way at Millbank, and pleasantly enough, although my horizon seemed limited and promotion stagnated. I was however, very happily placed. I took deep and absorbing interest in my work; I was serving under, and with, sym-



pathetic chiefs and colleagues, to whom I must devote a few words. I particularly wish to pay my tribute of affectionate esteem to Mr. Morrish, our Governor, a veteran officer, who had served with Captain Groves at Millbank, and afterwards was Governor of Dartmoor, when the old French war prison was reopened. He knew his business by heart, and was the kindest of men, full of solicitude for his charges, whom he ruled most judiciously and most leniently. His pet weakness was politics—he was a staunch Conservative—and he would descant by the hour upon current questions, invariably prefacing his remarks with "You must recollect," as he stood upon the hearthrug, with his fingers in the armholes of his waistcoat, and poured forth floods of talk.

We had two chaplains—of course, Church of England—both earnest men, who laboured assiduously in their sacred calling, but not, I fear, to much more purpose than their predecessors so far as permanent reformation of their charges. I made great friends with another clergyman, not of my own faith, Father Zanetti, an Italian, who was the Roman Catholic priest in attendance, a travelled, experienced man of the world. He was appointed to Millbank by a neighbouring Jesuit house, to which he was good enough to invite me, and there I spent many pleasant hours in the society of the fathers, all men of culture and breeding.

I must not omit to mention one curious survival of bygone days, in the person of the Chief Warder, who had begun life as a Bow Street runner, or "Robin Redbreast," as these prototypes of the London policemen were called, from their crimson waistcoats, and had risen to the highest subordinate rank after many years of varied service. He had grown enormously stout, and I had always a kindly recollection of him, for he was a mine of information about the old Penitentiary days, and he told many curious stories.

In my leisure moments I followed my strong leanings towards literature and art. The history of Millbank and its cognate subject of transportation and the penal system, begun in the manner described, were growing under my hand. I made many friends in the art world, spent much time in drawing, and often contributed to the best exhibi-



tions and art shows. Social distractions were not wanting to a bachelor who was well introduced, my time was practically my own in the evening, and I was free to accept as many invitations as I chose. A great change, however, was at hand. I was to pass suddenly to a very different scene, to undertake an entirely new task, not half-a-dozen miles from this same Millbank.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## WORMWOOD SCRUBS.

The Beginning of Wormwood Scrubs—Reminiscences of Sing Sing Prison—The First Batch of Prisoners at the Scrubs—Scandalised First-class Passengers—Ballast Burning—Sunday at the Scrubs—Amateur Brickmaking—A Paper Prison—Attempts at Prison Breaking—The Warders—Prison Labour at Wormwood Scrubs—Literary and Artistic Avocations—Holidaying—A Reminiscence of Kate Webster.

FOR years and years Millbank had been condemned as a prison, but, like threatened men, had long survived. In 1873-4, however, the vague rumours that had hitherto passed current took definite shape, and we heard on good authority that a site for the prison that was eventually to replace it had been secured on the western outskirts of London, in the immediate neighbourhood of Wormwood Scrubs, then an almost unknown country, forgotten since duelling had gone out of fashion, and sacred to the Household Cavalry as a ground for manœuvres, or to Volunteer marksmen. The news, I remember, reached us about Eastertide in 1874, and Mr. Morrish and I started off on a voyage of discovery one afternoon. I little thought, as I landed at the Wormwood Scrubs station, how often I should use it, and that I was to be the pioneer of great changes in the district. It seemed then a little like the end of the world, the Arctic regions let me say, for some survivor of a Polar expedition had named the local public house "The North Pole"; while close by was a row of houses named Erebus Terrace. At that time all around stretched a dreary and unsavoury landscape; burning brick "clamps," and great mounds of "kerf," or brick clay, and road sweepings, "mac" (macadam) as it is called, which go to make the yellow London stock brick, rubbish heaps, which were con-

stantly turned over and sifted by the London *chiffoniers* searching for dropped treasures. On one side was the enclosure of the Gun Club ; on the other, the ranges and the butts and the Rifleman Hotel ; and all about, holiday-makers disporting. The scene was not inspiring, and we returned with delight to the heart of London town, hoping that the new prison project would be shelved, like so many that had preceded it.

My fate, and I may say at once, my good fortune, was, however, to be closely identified with Wormwood Scrubs. As the winter approached I was suddenly summoned to the Central Office, then at 44, Parliament Street, and into the presence of Colonel Du Cane. It was to receive my marching orders. The preliminaries had been so far completed that it was possible to begin work with a small party of convicts, located in the temporary prison. I was to take charge, and was ordered to visit the place forthwith, and report upon the exact condition of affairs.

The plan to be pursued was that recommended by John Howard, a century before, when setting forth his ideal prison.

"I would have it built in a great measure by convicts," he wrote. "Let the surrounding wall, intended for full security against escape, be completed, and proper lodges for the gatekeepers. Let temporary buildings in the nature of barracks be erected in some part of this enclosure, which will be wanted at least till the whole is finished. Let one or two men, with their proper keepers, and under the direction of the builder, be employed in levelling the ground, digging out the foundations, serving the masons, sawing the timber and stone, and, as I have found several convicts who were carpenters, masons, and smiths, these may be employed in their own branches of trade, since such work is as necessary and proper as any other in which they can be engaged. Let the people thus employed chiefly consist of those whose term is nearly expired, or who are committed for a short term, and, as the ground is suitably



prepared for the builders, the garden made, the wells dug, and the building finished, let those who are to be dismissed go off gradually, as it would be very improper to send them back to the hulks or gaols again."

The project was at first deemed too extravagant and far-fetched for adoption, and yet practical effect was given to it some fifty years later in the United States. A notable prison Governor, Elam Lynds, built the Sing Sing prison, some fifty miles from New York City, in this fashion, with a colony of convicts planted in the open country, upon the shore of the Hudson River. The manner in which it was done "would no doubt raise incredulity, were not the fact quite recently and publicly known in the United States," say Beaumont and de Tocqueville, in their account of American prisons (1837). "To understand it we have only to realise what resources the new prison discipline of America placed at the disposal of an energetic man." I was privileged to visit and inspect Sing Sing, when I was in America in 1891, and found it a well-planned, well-placed edifice, covering a wide extent of ground. The discipline had degenerated, however, and was not of the strictest, according to our ideas of penal treatment. The whole body of prisoners stood idle, for a recent Act of the New York legislature had put a stop peremptorily to all prison labour, in obedience to the pressure brought by the Knights of Labour, a powerful political organisation which disapproved of State competition with the free labour market. Sing Sing had been turning out great quantities of goods manufactured within the gaol, hardware and ironmongery, especially stoves. All such work was forbidden, and had ceased so suddenly that I found half-finished articles in the workshops, and machinery rusting where it lay.

It was a sad sight to see many hundreds of able-bodied, intelligent prisoners without employment of any kind, left to kill time as best they could, in lazy enjoyment of the passing hour. I found large numbers reclining in the hammocks in their cells, reading novels and light literature, a plentiful supply of which was regularly sent by friends

outside. They were well fed, for the prison dietaries were ample, and the allowance unlimited; and, besides, more toothsome food could be obtained, without stint, from without. At the gateway I saw any number of baskets of provisions waiting for distribution, and I made some remark thereon to my escort, the Chief Warder, asking him if the prisoners were allowed to consume them. "Eat! Of course they're allowed to eat the stuff. They may eat till they burst, and then we bury them. We've got a dandy burial ground."

The same indulgent spirit was to be seen in the general permission to smoke. The tobacco store was a well-stocked, much-frequented place of business, presided over by a convict who had a notable history, having been the partner of General Grant, and the cause of his money troubles. I remember that he was so kind as to offer me a cigar, pressing it upon me courteously, with the assurance, "You will find it a good one." But, unfortunately for myself, I did not smoke in those days. Yet more: the wish to keep their unwilling guests in good humour, led the authorities to introduce "Social Evenings," when the convicts met, and gave concerts that were most successful, I was told. I do not believe that dress clothes and white ties were *de rigueur* at Sing Sing, although according to published reports they are in vogue at some other easy-going American prisons.

To return to Wormwood Scrubs. Twenty minutes from Victoria Station took me into a new world. A rough track, brick-red in colour, had been marked out, the present "Du Cane Road," leading from Bush Lane, an unmacadamised and very indifferent thoroughfare, not yet "taken to by the parish," across brickfields and cabbage-gardens, to where an extensive hoarding marked the enclosure of the new prison demesne. This paling, ten feet high, was my "boundary wall"; the best means provided for the safe keeping of the prisoners to be committed to my charge. A pair of wooden doors, closed inside by a bar and padlock, constituted the "gate," the entrance and exit always so jealously guarded by the official "on the lock," who was held personally responsible for everything and everybody that passed



through. I entered without question, and saw a great bare space, in the centre of which were a couple of small huts, with tarpaulin-covered roofs, and around, the untidiness of recent building. The lodge at the gate was of brickwork; it was to be the receptacle of the "key" safe, but the huts were of more fragile construction, although one was the temporary prison, and the other the guard-room and kitchen. In all these preparations the suggestions of John Howard had been closely followed—"outer wall, lodge, and barrack."

The last was the most interesting of the three, and the very latest development of a place of durance, in marked contrast to its earliest form, as exhibited at Millbank, or, say, the Tower of London. Sir Edmund du Cane's design was simplicity itself, the edifice as light as a birdcage, as airy as a summer house or conservatory. It could be called a prison only by courtesy; the shell, a two-storied building, was a flimsy structure—a wooden framework, its external sides filled in with brick "nogging," one thickness of brick, the internal faced with corrugated iron, of which also the partitions between the cells were composed. The floors of the central hall and cells were of concrete, the doors of the latter wooden, but faced with sheet iron, the locks everywhere, to cells, passages, and in external or "security" doors, of the newest and most approved pattern. There was to be accommodation for one hundred prisoners in each of the wings, of which one was so far completed as to be ready for the reception of a limited number of prisoners—a total of nine.

This, the first batch, arrived a few days later, all "blue dress" men, or convicts in the last year of their imprisonment, who might be relied upon not to run away, although the road was open and London well within sight. By this time I had made all the necessary arrangements, got in stores and equipment, food, bedding, utensils, necessities of all sorts, for the nearest shops were a couple of miles distant, and the establishment must perforce be self-supporting. The guard-room had to be furnished, and the officers' mess set going, for the constant presence of the staff



would be indispensable; my warders must live and sleep on the premises. I had a bed prepared for myself in one of the small rooms adjoining the prison block, and intended for offices, stores, and general administration. I still kept my chambers near Victoria Station, and came and went to my work daily by the Underground, but thought it right to remain on duty occasionally all night. I was an object of doubt and suspicion sometimes to my fellow-travellers by train. One Sunday morning, returning from early service at the prison (we used the hall of the prison block as chapel), I thoughtlessly entered a first-class carriage just as I was, in a rough suit of "dittoes" and heavy boots, thick with the plentiful mud of the Scrubs. The company was made up of a number of smartly-dressed churchgoers, who, quite justifiably perhaps, were much scandalised by my appearance, and made some very pointed remarks about the impudence of people who travelled in a higher class than their tickets warranted. I think my critics would have requested the guard to eject me, but I produced my first-class season ticket, and with it my card. "I am the Governor of the new prison to be built at Wormwood Scrubs," I said, "where things are still a little rough. Perhaps by the time you pay me a visit the road will be better, or perhaps you may have the privilege of being accommodated in Black Maria?" A very hearty laugh followed, and we were all excellent friends for the rest of the journey.

My first hands, the nine convicts I have mentioned, were all "tradesmen," the prison name for artisans or handicraftsmen, carpenters, fitters, smiths, and so forth, and they were turned at once upon the work of finishing the rest of the first lot of cells. To increase my strength in numbers was most desirable, and I received fresh drafts continually, so soon as quarters were made ready. Within a few weeks my total rose to fifty, and by Easter I had the whole hundred in custody. It was possible now to proceed with the erection of the other half of the temporary prison, and with other urgent services—in anticipation of the serious business of building the prison proper, four prisons really, with a chapel of imposing proportions and other appur-

tenances. Two classes of work called for immediate attention—one was “ballast burning,” the other the preparation of brickmaking “kerf,” the excavation of clay in sufficient quantities, and its admixture with other ingredients to constitute the proper raw materials.

Builders and contractors of the metropolis will forgive me if I pause to say a word or two about “ballast burning,” familiar enough to them, but less so, perhaps, to the general reader. The product is a kind of large red gravel, the *débris*, it might be, of broken bricks, invaluable as a substitute for gravel, in the making of concrete or laying the foundations of roadways. All our paths and firm places soon assumed a brick-red hue, readily recognisable as originating in ballast. There is a certain art in building up a ballast fire, which starts from an inner core of wood, raised in a pyramid, with flues running across to create a draught. Clay mixed with coal dust is at first applied in thin coats, and, as combustion proceeds, more and more clay is added, until the “heap” grows at last to gigantic proportions. The whole art consists in regularly feeding the fire; it must be made up last thing at night and again at the earliest hour in the morning.

Our difficulty at the Scrubs was when Sunday intervened. The day of rest is always religiously observed in prison; it is cherished as a right by prisoners, and fully acknowledged as such by the authorities. But my ballast fires would have gone out on Sunday if not fed during the day, and, feeling the paramount necessity of the work, I turned out a party to deal with it, and encountered the nearest approach to a mutiny I have ever seen. The whole party to a man refused to work. It was a case for concession on both sides. I knew and had seen the effect of a little extra diet when emergency had arisen, and now I took it upon myself to promise an additional allowance of cocoa in payment for the Sunday labour demanded. The offer was eagerly accepted, and I had no more trouble; indeed, the “ballast fire” party became a prime favourite, and there were always candidates for the job far in excess of the numbers required. It was not so easy to satisfy my masters



in Parliament Street, to whom, of course, I immediately reported the circumstances, and I had some difficulty in persuading them to sanction the extra diet, but they yielded on realising its necessity.

The officials of Parliament Street were always governed by a desire to stick to the letter of the regulations. I may mention another instance of this. Wormwood Scrubs, as an offshoot of Millbank, was at first held to be a "close" prison, as distinguished from a public works prison, and, although the work was on precisely the same lines as the latter, the system of the former was enforced. Thus, in a "close" prison, light, low-cut shoes are the rule, a perfectly useless foot-covering in the mud and slush of the Scrubs; yet I was long in obtaining an issue of heavy, laced-up boots, such as are worn "on the works," or of warm brown jerseys, which are unknown in the separate prisons. There was some demur as to granting me the full staff of ten per cent., calculated on the "works" basis, and, but for my earnest protest, I should have been restricted to the "close" prison five per cent. It was not till long afterwards, when my weakness threatened serious trouble, as I had good reason to fear, that my staff was put on a fully adequate footing.

Winter is the season for getting the clay in order for brick-making, and it was a part of our business to make the whole of the bricks required, except the few of red or blue colour needed for the decorative string courses. Parties, constantly enlarged as our numbers increased, were set to dig within the enclosure for the abundant material, and spread it out over a wide space, where it might be exposed to the weather and disintegrate. "Barrow runs" were organised, plank paths along which men wheeled full barrows, to be taken up by others who had brought back the empties. A continuous stream was thus setting forward always, and the clay, when extracted, was piled for future use at the brick machines. An ancient expert brickmaker was engaged to regulate the admixture of other ingredients, to be laid in alternate strata—first the clay, then a layer of coal, then one of road sweepings, commonly called "mac," to temper



the stiffness of the clay. When by-and-by the "kerf" thus formed was to be carried on to the "pug," or raised platform from which the machine was fed, it was duly cut at the bottom of the heap, so that the stuff was thrown down, and mixed itself naturally before it was shovelled into the barrows. The operations of brickmaking were the staple employments of our convicts when summer came, the only possible time to carry them out.

I became quite proficient in brickmaking, and could talk as glibly as anyone brought up to the trade. I could follow the "kerf" to the "pug," and see the stuff pass through the rollers on to the plate in a long, broad, thick riband, to be cut off into lengths, and then carried carefully away on the "bearing-off" barrows to the "hacks," long rows of screens, adjustable to the position of the sun and the direction of the wind, where they dried slowly, and were regularly "skintled," or rearranged so that the air might get all around them, enabling them to dry at the same rate all over. The next stage is removal to the "clamp," to be slowly built up with the green bricks, carefully packed with the requisite air passages, so that there may be no running together when incandescent. The product may be the most perfect form of "stock," light yellow, hard, sound, sharp-edged, giving out a clean, metallic ring when struck together, the reverse of "chuffy," which is soft, and given to crumbling. It was with no little pride that I saw our first product passed by the foreman expert, and declared serviceable. They were no sooner ready (the first batch, I think, in June), than they were put into use in the foundations, already well advanced, for we had begun work at them directly we got upon the ground.

Six months had made a marvellous change in the aspect of the Scrubs. The whole of the temporary prison had been completed, and two hundred cells were fully occupied, so that I had now a very respectable amount of convict labour on hand for the various works in progress. The place was to a great extent self-contained and self-supporting. We prided ourselves on doing everything, as far as possible, on the spot. We had our own "Artisans' Yard," a range of

sheds, in which were carpenters' benches, a forge and fire and anvils, a circular saw, lathes—all the tools and paraphernalia of the skilled handicrafts. A good deal of material, however, reached us from other prisons, manufactured against the time when the buildings would be getting above ground. Millbank sent us door panels and doors lined with sheet iron. Portland quarried and dressed the stone for the window sills, and provided iron castings for bars and frames and staircases, and so on. The scene was one of steady, satisfactory industry from morning till dusk; the labour was forced, but was given, I think, ungrudgingly, and my workmen were, for the most part, contented, even happy. There was little misconduct; punishments were rare, extending only to reduced dietary and forfeiture of marks; I had no dark cell. True, the bulk of my prisoners in those early days were well-conducted men, "first class" and "blue dress" men who had earned their "remission" and were so near the day of release that they gave no trouble. But, as time passed, these special men grew scarce; I had to fill up with ordinary drafts of the recently sentenced just like other works prisons. Still, I had no great reason to complain, and I have often thought that my constant presence among them, for I was in and about the whole day long, had a good effect. I owed something also to the fact that my punishments, although few, were always prompt and exemplary.

One instance of this may be quoted. It occurred quite early in my *régime*, when only the first half of the prison was occupied, and had to be used for all purposes just as it was. The central hall, on to which the cells on either side opened, served as chapel, and, when divine service was performed, the prisoners brought their cell stools, and sat in rows facing the staircase, on the top of which the chaplain stood and officiated. The chaplain in question was the incumbent of a church in Shepherd's Bush, lying a mile away, who came up across the fields on Sunday mornings to perform divine service. Once, when it was in full progress, with all due solemnity and decorum, a frightful yell rang through the hall, followed by a second, and yet a third. A couple of warders ran to the point from which the



disturbance came—a cell containing a prisoner who had not been allowed to attend the service, because he was “under report,” waiting, that is to say, to answer for some prison offence. It was only the work of a moment to get him out and carry him off to a distant part of the enclosure, where his cries were no longer audible. Meanwhile, the chaplain, at a signal from me, had continued his service, and the rest of the prisoners, a hundred of them, had remained perfectly quiet. I was afraid, at first, of a general uproar, which might have been difficult to quell in that remote spot, with only half a dozen of us against such a crowd. But the spirit of discipline was strong, the moral control sufficient to impose and maintain order, although there was no real reason why the prisoners should not have risen, broken their slender bonds, and walked off straight into London.

I thought it right, however, to vindicate authority by bringing my turbulent breaker of the peace immediately to account. He was a little disappointed, I believe, that his evil example had not been followed by the others, and when, after service, he was again lodged in his cell, he made no second attempt at disturbance, deterred, no doubt, by my intimation that I should “put him back for the Director,” in other words, that his case would be dealt with by superior authority. Our Director was Mr. Fagan, who will be remembered as a strict disciplinarian, once an officer of the Commissariat, who had been associated with Sir Edmund Henderson and Captain Du Cane in the creation of the convict colony in Western Australia in 1854.

Mr. Fagan lived at Brixton, and I resolved to call at his private house to beg him to pay us a visit at Wormwood Scrubs early next day. When I left him he desired me to send to Millbank for all the apparatus necessary for the infliction of corporal punishment, and I knew then what he meant to do. He arrived soon after breakfast, “tried the case,” took sworn evidence, and ordered a couple of dozen lashes, which were promptly administered in the same central hall where the offence had been committed just twenty-four hours before. No other prisoners were present at the ceremony, yet I knew the news of the summary punish-



ment inflicted would soon travel round, and its main object, deterrence, would be fully secured. I have never approved of flogging, except in extreme cases, but I submit that this was distinctly one of them—as even its most determined opponents will surely allow. My powers of restraint were very slender, but they sufficed, as the event proved, if only I could appeal at need to more rigorous methods. It must be admitted, however, that the particular object for whom they were invoked was not in the least cowed by the cat. When he was taken down from the triangle after he had endured it all without a sign or a groan, he turned to us and said coolly, "Now, I'll fight the best man among you." The man's bravado was of a piece with his misconduct, the desire to show off, and I was sorry enough to have been obliged to punish him so severely for that which, under other conditions, might have been lightly dealt with. But I could not afford to allow the smallest license to the men I held in, so to speak, a paper prison. This was the only case in which corporal punishment was inflicted during my reign at Wormwood Scrubs.

It was a strange fact that, notwithstanding the absence of the conventional means of restraint, and the obvious insecurity of the prison, only two attempts to escape were made in my time, neither of which could be called serious or determined. One was that of a prisoner who was being escorted across the ground to empty a can of slops. He dropped his burthen and ran for his life to the boundary fence. Pursuit was immediate and successful; the fugitive raced for liberty, the warder behind for his situation, and the latter won the day. The other attempt was by night, and much more elaborate, and had the night been longer we might have lost our man. He set himself to dig a hole in his floor, which was of cement, but a convenient crack had split the surface, and he could get through the crust to the softer stuff below. No doubt he hoped to burrow down below the brick foundations, and drive a tunnel to the free air; but daylight, and the time of unlocking, came before he had half completed his job, and he was taken in the very act of trying to break prison.

Later, long after my time, when the great blocks were finished and occupied, several escapes occurred, and curiously enough, were directly traceable to the novel manner in which the prison had been built. To secure the perfect ventilation of the cells had been the great aim of the designer and architect, Sir Edmund Du Cane, and he had honeycombed the external walls with flues, serving as fresh-air inlets, by which means a thorough draught was established, and the foul air driven through the opening at the top of each cell. The prisoner bricklayer who had helped to build the walls, knowing the flues, and one or other prisoners at a second visit remembering them, were enabled to locate them, and perforate the outer wall.

The astuteness with which the convict-workmen turned their hands to their own profit was shown in another, and rather amusing way. Towards the end of the first year it became desirable to press on with the building, and add to the prison's population. I recommended, therefore, the occupation of the cells first completed upon the ground floor of the first block, although the three floors above did not exist, and there was, of course, no roof. A gallery or passage, giving access to these cells, was covered in from the weather with tarpaulins, and the cells themselves were left with their arched roofs, which were covered with cement, and were intended to serve for the floors of the cells immediately above. This layer of cement did not prove entirely water-tight during the winter rains. The roofs leaked considerably at times, all but one of them, through which the wet never came. The clerk of works in charge was moved to make close inquiry into this phenomenon, and he found that a double layer of cement had been applied to the arch; still more, we found that the man who had done this was the actual occupant of this more snugly-sheltered cell. It served him right when he was moved into a different cell.

In all this, the safe keeping, control, and utilisation of the prisoners, I was ably seconded by my officers. I can never forget what I owe to them; their devoted and unstinting service, their patient, cheerful endurance of much hardship



and anxiety were beyond all praise. The first months were spent in the utmost discomfort; they left their homes and their families to live in a single-roomed shanty, where they messed together, and slept when off duty; and they were in the open all day and night, and in all weathers, and constantly on night guard. They were all volunteers, for beyond doubt residence in London was an advantage to most in helping to establish sons and daughters, and they had been picked out of a long list of candidates from the chief prisons in our service. I have had a considerable experience of the warder fraternity, to whose merits I gladly bear witness, as on the whole an upright, steadfast, hard-working body of men, of good character and the best intentions. My officers at the Scrubs were excellent specimens of their class, kindly and forbearing, often under great provocation, generally fair and impartial, expecting ready obedience, and exacting good behaviour, rough spoken, no doubt, but seldom yielding to temper or exhibiting petty tyranny. I had abundant opportunities for observing them, my eye was on them at all hours of the day, and often when they were quite unconscious of it, and I had never much fault to find.

Quite the first and best of the whole staff, in quality no less than in rank, was the Chief Warder, Mr. Coffey, who had been promoted to his office from Dartmoor, where he had risen from Assistant to Principal Warder. Never had anyone in authority over others a more loyal and zealous lieutenant and second in command. He was entirely trustworthy; if I were absent I could rely upon him always to represent me, and act for me with judgment and decision. He had an excellent way with both officers and prisoners; firm, but not over-bearing, to the first, insisting upon the exact and punctual performance of duty; with the latter strict, but conciliatory, preferring always to lead rather than drive, to talk reason with a man who was shaping badly rather than threaten him. He was never afraid of responsibility, and accepted it most usefully in one particular, that of sudden illness, real or feigned. Just as we had no regular chaplain, so we had no resident medical



officer, and that we escaped any disastrous consequences from this somewhat ill-judged economy, we had to thank Mr. Coffey. According to the arrangements made for us, we could call in a general practitioner from Shepherd's Bush in any emergency, such as an accident in the works, but the "complaining sick," as we called the current cases, were attended by Dr. Hoffmann, the surgeon of the Fulham convict prison,\* two miles or more distant, who came up daily to inspect and treat them. Obviously there was risk, danger even, in this course, and I strongly protested, but without avail. That no *contretemps* occurred was, as I have said, due to Mr. Coffey, who was provided with what was tantamount to a field hospital, the simple drugs and the appliances for first aid, and who acted always with great skill and promptitude in administering the proper palliatives and remedies. I shall never forget his delight when he was introduced to the use of the clinical thermometer, and found that it was always possible to discount the most alarming symptoms of the most cunning malingerers by taking their temperature.

Mr. Coffey was a serious-minded man, of good education, who had read much. Unlike the general run of warders, he had had no previous service in army or navy, but had been brought up as a gardener, the business of which he knew thoroughly. He had a smart, well set-up figure, and was always the pink of neatness even in the midst of the mud and slush of our enclosure, and a model to his subordinates. He was assisted by two principal warders, solid, steady men, of long service, upon whom I could always rely, and I had a third "principal" at the gate, an old friend whose acquaintance I first made at Gibraltar, when he brought out a draft of convicts from Chatham. His name was Pepper, and his soubriquet in the prison was "The Real Cayenne," from his sharp methods of enforcing discipline. As gate-keeper, he prided himself on his strictness as to passing people through, in or out, and was dreadfully upset once when he allowed an ex-convict to enter on the pretence of

\* Afterwards H.M. Inspector of Retreats and Inebriates' Homes.

business with me. Yet it was a very pardonable mistake, for my man had all the outward appearance of a gentleman; he was dressed in a well-fitting frock coat, wore a tall hat, and assumed a most jaunty air. He claimed acquaintance with me, and hoped for my assistance in securing a situation, on the grounds that he had known me at Gibraltar, where I remembered him as a very ill-conducted convict. He had once been an officer in the army, and it was a curious coincidence that, as he came up to me smiling, with outstretched hand, a friend was standing by my side, one of a firm of army agents, who knew him, and was fully cognisant of the crime—forgery—of which he had been convicted. Others about me out there on the works, where I received him, knew him well, old companions from Portland, where he had finished his time.

It was not the only occasion on which I was greeted by old hands. More than once, men with faces only dimly familiar have ranged up by my side in the streets, and reminded me that they "served along o' me at Wormwood Scrubs," as though it had been some glorious campaign. I have been followed down the pavement by a fellow, repeating the sing-song, "Inspector of Prisons—Attention," the usual notice given to prisoners when I visited the cells, in order to hear representations and complaints. One night, coming out of a theatre in the Strand, a tout came up to me more than usually pertinacious in his offer of "cab or carriage," and, when I accepted it, he made his antecedents known by crying, "Pentagon 3, sir." No one but a former inmate of old Millbank would have used the expression. All officials have much the same experiences, sometimes with threatened unpleasantness, as when a released "ticket-holder" of weak mind hung about the doors of the Home Office, meditating violence against a Director to whom he owed a grudge. Once Mr. Morrish (Governor of Millbank) and I were among the crowd in St. James's Park, waiting to see some procession, when we became objects of interest to a small knot of roughs, who knew us and meant mischief. We should probably have been hustled, perhaps attacked, if we had not moved away.



Two years slipped rapidly by, interested and busily engaged as I was in my work, which grew day by day under my hands. The first block or hall began to rise above ground in the autumn of the first year, and was occupied in the rough and ready way I have described. The foundations of the second and third blocks were commenced, and well forward; we had great stacks of new-made bricks, and were preparing further stores of kerf. It was no part of my duty to check the plans, which were designed and prepared in the headquarters office, under the inspiration of Sir Edmund Du Cane, and carried out by our clerk of works. But, although I had no expert knowledge, my advice was sought and my voice heard in all matters of appropriation and urgency of the various services. Thus, at an early day, I pressed for the completion of a "dumb" cell at the end of the first block, to which any especially insubordinate and recalcitrant prisoner might be committed when isolation was required. I strongly advocated also the provision of residences for at least a portion of my officers, and a terrace of small houses had been erected at the far end of the enclosure, and were already occupied as warders' quarters, an immense boon to those hard-working public servants, whose homes were now upon the spot, and their well-earned leisure was not cut into by long journeys to and fro. There was no provision for me, but I made my office my home through the working hours, and I had still my bedroom next door to use when I paid my night visits. I spent all day, and, as a rule, every day, at the prison, alternating between my desk and the works, which I visited and perambulated constantly, always on the alert to stimulate industry and watch the progress made.

I was in a position to do something towards the improvement and instruction of the prisoners, the development of their wage-earning powers. There were openings for handicraftsmen of all sorts, especially bricklayers, and we turned out numbers of workmen who, although prison taught, were fairly competent in their respective trades. My system was set forth in a report made to the Directors of Convict Prisons in 1876, from which I may quote the following:—



"The existence of two kinds of labour side by side, merely mechanical with that which is skilled and interesting, has, I grow more and more convinced, a very appreciable effect upon the general industry of the body of prisoners. Convicts still 'in the clay,' as it is called, will do much to escape the perpetual barrow run, the inevitable pickaxe and spade; a few may seem to compass their ends by misconduct to the extent of positive refusal to work, or by malingering and scheming to deceive the medical officers; but by far the largest proportion prefer fair means to foul; they are satisfied to wait patiently on until, by uniform submission and the steady performance of the heavier toil, they gain their reward, and are put to more agreeable, if not really easier, work. Nor does the advantage of this system end when the convict has been at length promoted to the privilege of working at or learning a trade; the knowledge that he may be relegated to the distasteful labour he has just left, if he prove idle or neglectful at the new, is a constant inducement to him to do his best. This, in fact, supplies that spur or stimulus to continuous effort of the highest kind, the absence of which has usually been alleged as the strongest argument against the value of 'penal' labour or labour that is forced. I have been repeatedly struck by the eager alacrity with which convict learners throw themselves into their new work. A few figures may be quoted in support of this. At this moment there are in all ninety-two bricklayers upon the building, and of these, only two ever handled a trowel before they entered a prison; the remainder are, therefore, entirely prison taught. Quite a dozen are now first-class workmen, and came here as such from other prisons; thirty-eight were sent here partially instructed, and have since greatly improved; but the balance of forty remaining, I have seen pass under my own eyes through the several stages: from the clay to carrying the hod, from the hod to the trowel on interior walls, till finally they have graduated, and have been advanced to the honour of 'facework,' which many execute to entire satisfaction.

"This general argument is, I think, further supported, and strongly in the cases of one or two real tradesmen, in

whom I have found at times, from difficulties of disposition or other causes, a certain disinclination to put forth all their skill. This may display itself in half-heartedness or assumed stupidity, failings difficult to expand into the actual offence of idleness, but tending, of course, to impede the progress of the work. Sometimes a convict possessed of special skill thinks himself indispensable, and his conceit and presumption cannot be left unchecked without danger to general discipline. With all such, removal to 'the clay' for periods varying according to the circumstances of the case, is a treatment nearly infallible; within my own experience I have found that the convict soon petitions to be restored to his old trade, and, by his subsequent behaviour, when restored to the privilege, renders it quite unnecessary to repeat the process.

"It may be that there is nothing very novel or startling in these remarks, but I am not aware that they have been committed to paper before, and I am desirous of adding my testimony to the general stock of evidence on the subject, more particularly as it is based upon close personal observation, and an intimate knowledge of the prisoners in my charge, which has been rendered possible by the smallness of their numbers, and my constant presence among them day after day while at work."

My own life was one of regular and, I hope, useful routine, pleasantly broken by varied interests and changing occupations out of business hours. I left my house in the Uxbridge Road every morning early to find my way across the fields, "rain or shine," undeterred by any weather, rejoicing always in the fresh, free air. On arrival at the prison I found "all correct," as my faithful Chief Warder reported, and everything in full swing. We very rarely lost a day's work through bad weather. The convicts worked whenever "free" men would have done so, and much preferred to be outside than locked up in their cells; fogs were our chief enemy. We were too far out, it is true, to suffer from the dark, dense pall that swallows up London at times, but it was occasionally thick enough to be dangerous, and favour escape. I made my frugal lunch off the sandwiches



I had brought with me, and spent the afternoon as I had the morning, ever on the move, showing myself all about, and exercising constant supervision. The recall from labour, serving teas and night locking, released me at varying hours according to the season, but never later than 5.30 p.m., and I was at liberty to go home, and further, if I so desired. My point generally was my club, where my evening clothes awaited me, and I might make myself presentable for the various social functions to which I might be bidden. A late train, for choice from Edgware Road (Underground) to Shepherd's Bush station, brought me about midnight to within call of any urgent summons from the prison. I may add that during the whole of my Governorship of the Scrubs I never once was disturbed.

I was a good deal alone in those days, and although my bodily presence at the prison was essential, I had no very severe mental occupation. My duties, although anxious and responsible, were often humdrum and easily performed. My thoughts turned as ever to literature and art. I completed another novel, "Lola, a Tale of the Rock,"\* in which I lived again the happy years spent at Gibraltar, already described. I produced a monograph on the English Army,† its past history, present condition, and future prospects, and I began to contribute pretty regularly to the press. The *World* was young then, but full of vigour, and Edmund Yates, editor and proprietor, always a staunch friend, was very encouraging; he accepted many of my articles on social, general, and, more particularly, on military topics. I had some facilities for writing the latter, for my old friend and patron, Lord Airey, was back at the Horse Guards now as Adjutant-General, and I was ever a welcome guest at his table, where I met the most prominent and rising soldiers of the day, Sir Garnet Wolseley, Sir George Greaves, Sir George Colley, Sir Thomas Baker, Sir Henry Brackenbury. The changes then imminent, thought by the older school to be so subversive, were much discussed, such as the abolition of regimental numbers under the territorial system, short

\* "Lola" (Smith and Elder), 1875.

† "The English Army" (Cassell), 1879.



service with the colours, and the creation of a first-class army reserve. I am free to confess that my predilections were for the old and time-honoured institutions about, as I thought, to be ruthlessly swept away. I wrote one article in the *World*, entitled "The Knell of Esprit de Corps," which attracted some attention, and brought down on my head the fierce protests of the doughty champions of change. As time passed I recanted my errors, and became an ardent supporter of the progressive school.\*

I was still more devoted to art, a humble follower of the many better men with whom I was privileged to associate and work. I was a member of the Arts Club, and numbered among my friends many distinguished brethren of the brush, Stacey Marks, Luke Fildes, Harry Woods, Keeley Halsewelle, Heywood Hardy, Charles Earle, Tommy Cooper (young Sidney Cooper's old son "Tommy"), Carlo Pelligrini, with his quaint, "Welcome, my fellow!" and his joyous ways. I was an assiduous attendant at the Langham Art Club, and still treasure the "exchanges" I was fortunate enough to make, after the night study had been drawn and contributed. Sketching parties were organised from my house to attack the promising subjects still to be met with in the fast vanishing country near at hand, and I can recall many merry evenings that followed the day's work. I "went out" with my friends on trips, short and long, seeking material direct from nature, now to the English Lakes, or into Kent, or into the neighbourhood of Dorking and Leith Hill, now far further afield to the happy hunting grounds of Switzerland, Venice, and the Italian Lakes.

I passed two autumn holidays abroad, being relieved at the Scrubs by another Deputy-Governor from Millbank. It would be difficult to exaggerate the delights of this complete change of life, avocations, surroundings; from dolorous prison scenes and the harsh driving of unhappy felons to nature at her best under bright skies, and viewing the

\* As I pen these lines I am reminded that change is incessant, and once more reformers are keen to revert to the old order of things. Lord Esher's Committee reported in favour of the revival of the regimental numerical title, and the present War Secretary is disposed to adopt the recommendation.

finest monuments of human effort. From Wormwood Scrubs to Venice! from the narrow horizon of a boundary fence to the open lagoons, with their burthen of gorgeous palaces, backed by the blue mountains of Cadore!

My companions on this first year's outing were Colonel Goff, then in the Coldstream Guards, a promising amateur, now of acknowledged fame, and renowned among painter-etchers, and Charles Earle, whose high merits as an artist were never sufficiently appreciated, but who was esteemed by a wide circle of friends as the most lovable of men. I may be forgiven if I record here a few brief memories of that happy time, more personally interesting to me, perhaps, than to the general reader. It was the early autumn, the season of fine colour; changeless, blue skies, glassy water, alive with iridescent reflections, the gaudy awnings of the gondolas, the rich, ripe fruit, the dazzlingly bright sails. How we revelled in it all, enjoying every hour! First the early coffee at the small shop below the Belle Arte, then each to his own gondola, most luxurious studio, in which Pietro or Jacopo had set the easel and prepared board or canvas, laid out the colour box and the clean brushes, and on to the "subject" in hand. Work till noon, *rendezvous* at the Café Quadri for breakfast, again to work till sundown, and then homeward to end the day with dinner, again at the Quadri, and a promenade in the moonlit crowded square of San Marco, beguiled by music and bright eyes.

After Venice we paused at Verona, and again at Pallanza on Lake Maggiore, still working strenuously; Earle at market scenes and street scenes, Goff at architecture, I at boats and shipping. There was friendly rivalry between us, although I was immeasurably below the standard of my two companions. I had the laugh against them, however, one day, when at work on the lake shore, at a thoroughly conventional subject—boats with striped awnings, blue water, blue sky, intensely blue, blue mountains in the distance, the Isola Bella in the middle of the sketch—and was repaid by the warm encomiums of a couple of English ladies, who exclaimed, "How sweetly pretty!"



while my comrades at my side sneered at the exaggerated praise.

I travelled homewards with Goff across the Simplon, in a return carriage down to Brieg, and along the lovely valley of Sion, to the Lake of Geneva, where I stayed a few days with friends at Ouchy. By the middle of October I was once more in harness at the Scrubs, trudging daily across the fields to hear reports, and keep my convicts up to the mark. But nothing could rob me of my recollections.

The following year I went much the same road with one of the same companions, making first for Locarno, on Lake Maggiore, then for Riva, on Lake Garda, and reaching Venice last of all—a no less ideal trip, marred towards the close by a hasty summons home to see my dying father; but, unhappily, I arrived too late, although I travelled straight through without a pause. The winter following brought considerable change into my life, for I moved into a larger house, and set up housekeeping with my mother and sister. I only refer to these purely personal affairs to bring in a story of our narrow escape from admitting a potential murderess into the house. Returning one evening from the prison, I found my mother negotiating with a new cook, whom she had practically engaged when I appeared. Her name was Kate Webster, and I recollect her as a thick-set, broadly-built woman, with a face that was unprepossessing, though hardly bad—quietly steadfast eyes, a firm, hard-set mouth, and strong chin. The matter was all but arranged, to the extent, at least, of taking up her character, when my messenger warder arrived on the scene to take the evening letters to the post. He was in uniform, and his appearance, I could see, made a marked impression on the new cook. I do not think she asked any direct question, but she no doubt quickly perceived that I was in some way connected with police or prisons, and she left very abruptly, merely saying that she thought the situation would not suit her. Something like a year elapsed before the catastrophe—Kate Webster murdered her mistress in 1879 under peculiarly savage, cold-blooded circumstances.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

## INSPECTOR OF PRISONS.

The Movement for Unifying Prisons—Appointed an Inspector of Prisons—A Visit from the Home Secretary: An Unfortunate Beginning—A Violent Prisoner—The Prisons Commission—Sir Edmund Du Cane—His Pungent Comments—Admiral Hornby and His Lancashire Experiences—Mr. Perry Watlington and Captain Walter Stopford—The Inspectors.

ANOTHER year or more passed, and a further and greater change was approaching. In 1876 the question had been raised of placing the whole of the prisons of the country under State management, and weld all the local jurisdictions into one central department, seated at the Home Office. The moving spirit was, no doubt, Sir Edmund Du Cane, who had strongly impressed his views upon Mr. Cross, the Home Secretary for the time being. An article appeared in the *Times* about that date, no doubt officially inspired, setting forth the advantages of uniform administration. It clearly proved that the existing system was faulty, full of serious flaws and shortcomings. There was first a marked difference in the methods of government in the various gaols. The discipline in one was much more severe than in another. In one county the offender was let off easily, pampered and overfed; he did little or no work, and laughed at the penalties imposed. In the neighbouring county the very reverse obtained. There was great variety in the labour. Treadwheels, although pretty general throughout the country, were by no means equal in the labour they imposed, in the number of revolutions, in the heights ascended, or the hours of performance. Again, in the matter of expenditure there was great divergence; the cost per prisoner varied greatly. The earnings might arise to considerable

sums, or fall to next to nothing by misapplication of the labour available. Worse than all was the great waste in the means provided for enforcing imprisonment. In one district the prison was so full that numbers had to be leased out as lodgers to another, which was half empty, and on a scale far in excess of the requirements of the case. The existence of a great variety of jurisdictions led to the maintenance of several prisons side by side. There were three at least in Lincoln city alone, and four in Lincoln county. Cambridgeshire had four prisons, and Devonshire five. Many small towns had their own gaol, such as Sandwich, Poole, Ripon, Ruthin, Wisbech and Stamford. The need for reorganisation, concentration, and unification was obvious, and comprehensive measures were presently introduced by the Home Secretary in order to compass this great end.

I happened to be dining with a friendly M.P. on the night of the first reading of the Prisons Bill, and he took me with him to the House of Commons, where from a snug seat "under the gallery" I listened attentively to Mr. Cross. It was a full House, and his speech was well received, although later it led to a very hot discussion. The measure was resented by the local magistracy; it reflected upon their management, it threatened to rob them of power and influence, and was too much of an innovation to please old-fashioned people, although its author was an out-and-out Conservative. All kinds of evils were predicted if it should become law; scandals must inevitably follow on State control. Cases might be multiplied, from past experience, of cruelty and hardships inflicted under the heartless, hard and fast rules of Government officials. Mr. Cross found most opposition on his own side, and had to make many concessions to the reluctance of local authorities to surrender their administrative power. The magistrates had to be counted with, and before the Bill could be passed it became necessary to accept a sort of dual control over the prisons; the magistrates, although they had no voice in the government, were to be admitted to watch proceedings and to criticise and find fault. This led at first to much friction,



and gave some colour to the belief that the new system would never work. Happily, however, the forecast was by no means justified, and it was my good fortune to contribute something to the carrying out of the new measures, as I may be permitted to show. The privilege and opportunity were afforded to me by my appointment as one of H.M. Inspectors of Prisons. I owed this to the goodwill of Mr. Cross, on the kindly recommendation of my old chief, Sir Edmund Du Cane.

I had no reason to expect this, for my first meeting with the Home Secretary was not altogether auspicious. It fell out in this wise. One day I was spending the convicts' dinner hour very agreeably in my little office, revising the manuscript of a novel I had on the stocks,\* and my desk was strewn with the chapters in sheets. Suddenly a warder rushed in with the news that the "Chairman," the head of the Department, had just entered the prison, accompanied by another gentleman. I left my papers as they were, and went down forthwith to receive my guests, in the second of whom I immediately recognised the Home Secretary, then Mr. Cross.

"We'll go straight to your office, please," said Sir Edmund du Cane; "the Home Secretary would like to inspect your books and journals until the prisoners turn out for labour."

As I have said, I used the room as a den and sanctum more than for business purposes, but my visitors could hardly have known that, and both looked askance at the littered table and general untidiness.

"Show me your punishment book," said the great man abruptly, and on the spur of the moment I said I did not keep one.

"How? This is most improper," began the Home Secretary, in a stern voice, when I hastened to add that we used loose sheets as more convenient for submission to the Directors through the post.

"You seem to be very severe," went on Mr. Cross, still very stiff.

\* "A Wayward Woman." Smith and Elder. 1879.



"It is my rule, sir, to drop heavily on all prison offenders. I have always found it check misconduct."

"I see a man is sentenced to leg irons. What weight of irons do you impose?" he asked next.

"I'm not sure," I answered, making a shot off-hand; "thirteen or fourteen pounds." And he at once took me sharply to task.

"That's illegal; it must be looked into at once."

The question of the weight of irons had been raised a few nights previously in the House of Commons, and I was very wide of the mark. Sir Edmund grew more and more distressed. He had came up to the Scrubs to show it off to the Minister, and, as I afterwards learnt, to do me a good turn, and I was failing him miserably. However, I made my peace by producing the "iron" book, in which the weight of each set was recorded at the time they were put on. More questions followed, and I was more lucky in my answers. Then Mr. Cross caught sight of the sketches with which I had decorated the walls, painted in oil straight on to the plaster (an excellent medium, by the way), and he got up to examine them more closely, and, when his back was turned, at a signal from Sir Edmund, I hastily swept my MSS. out of sight.

"Who did these?" asked the Home Secretary. "You did? Really? They are exceedingly nice," and from that moment he was my friend.

By this time the parade for labour was in progress, the parties were marched off to their appointed places, and the machine was set going with its customary smoothness and regularity. It happened that day that a great boiler, in connection with the heating apparatus, had arrived, and had to be fixed in the basement of the first block. It was a tough job, and I believe Mr. Cross thought it beyond us, but when he had gone to the farthest point of the enclosure and returned he found that the boiler had been cleverly man-handled and moved into position. Everything worked well that day, and I confess I felt proud of the appearance we cut in the eyes of our supreme chief. I had one more case for Mr. Cross, and not quite so pleasing as the ordered

industry around. Before he turned to go, he asked whether I had any prisoners under punishment, for he felt it to be his duty to inquire if they desired to make any complaint. There was only one, a hopeless incorrigible, who had given me no end of trouble—so much, indeed, that I gravely suspected he was of unsound mind. He had been very violent and destructive; he had used the foulest language and abuse, and I was only awaiting the sanction of the Directors to send him up to Millbank for medical observation. I did not much like visiting him in state, so to speak, as I expected a scene, and, possibly, some overt act of a more or less serious kind. When the cell door was opened, a warder went in first, and took post, according to rule, close in front of him, to control his movements if threatening, and we stood, three or four of us, inside, near the door, to assist if required. This did not please the Home Secretary, who, in his anxiety to do justice, declared that he would speak to the prisoner alone, and with great reluctance the warder, who had already entered the cell, was ordered to come out and make room for Mr. Cross. My warder retired warily, facing the man and keeping his eye on him, but, still, Sir Edmund Du Cane only narrowly escaped assault, for the prisoner sprang at him with a horrible yell, and was repelled and subdued with great difficulty. There was no more idea of a private interview with the Home Secretary.

The Prison Commission, charged with the inauguration of the new department—no small undertaking where the annual expenditure amounted to half a million of money, and the total numbers dealt with, staff and prisoners, exceeded 20,000 men—had been constituted as soon as the Bill became law. The Commissioners, secretary, and clerical staff were appointed, and established in the recently opened Home Office building in Whitehall. The *personnel* thus constituted consisted of four Commissioners, Sir Edmund Du Cane as chairman, Admiral Hornby, R.N., Mr. Perry Watlington, and Captain Walter Stopford. The secretary was Mr. (now Sir) Robert Anderson, afterwards Assistant Commissioner of Police and head of the Criminal Investiga-



tion Department. An Engineer officer, Captain (now Colonel) McHardy, C.B., Chairman of the Scotch Prisons Commission, was attached as adviser as to conversion and construction of prison buildings. Finance was in the hands of Mr. Crickmay, and stores of Mr. Padbury, both of them officers of long experience in such duties, whose services were lent by the Directors of Convict Prisons, a very old and well managed office. Six Inspectors, of whom I was one, and a seventh for medical business were to be appointed later, when the prisons were actually taken over the following year.

The character and quality of this *personnel* so closely affected the working and ultimate success of the new department, that it may be well to give some account of the most prominent figures.

Sir Edmund Du Cane, who died full of honours in 1902, will always take rank as one of our first authorities on prison concerns, thoroughly versed in the science, history, and administration of penal law. His connection with the subject began when he was a young lieutenant of Engineers. He, in 1852, accompanied Captain Henderson, R.E. (afterwards the well-known Sir Edmund Henderson, of the Metropolitan Police), to help in the formation of the new convict colony in Western Australia. From that time forth he was essentially a member of the Civil Service, but his leanings towards the military profession were always strong, and he was, in his way, a specialist in fortification. His views and schemes for the national defences were held in great esteem, and he was in a position to give effect to one branch by the erection of the forts around Blue Bell Hill, Rochester, which were built by convicts, under his supervision, for the protection of Chatham Dockyard and the line of the River Medway. I have already referred to his tenure of the office of Inspector of Military Prisons.

Sir Edmund had few equals in the conduct of official business, but his methods in the management of men made him unpopular at times. He was as sharp as a needle, and went straight to the core of every subject he tackled; his mastery of details was almost phenomenal, his was an exact, mathematical mind, and he could carry long arrays of figures



in his head, and marshal elaborate facts with the utmost precision. His minutes and memoranda were pungent and practical, a trifle verbose, perhaps, and their clearness suffered often from his practice of "writing in" or adding fresh and not always weightier arguments to a statement already sufficiently forcible and complete. They were easier to read when typed or copied by another hand, for his penmanship was of that neat, minute kind that looks like print till one tries to read it; now and again the pain of deciphering them was as nothing to that conveyed in the bitterness of the comments, the sharp, stinging lash of his pen when displeased. On one particular occasion, by no means the only one, I came under reproof, and it was so unjust, and expressed with so much severity, that I ventured to protest. Half an hour afterwards I received a bulky letter, marked "private," and on opening it I found that it contained the fragments of the offending minutes. It was a generous impulse that dictated such a handsome *amende*, and I was naturally, greatly touched by it.

He did not always unbend in this way, and there were many unpleasant quarters of an hour for his subordinates when summoned to his presence. No one answered very cheerfully to the call, brought by old Oulton, the suave, soft-voiced messenger: "The Chairman, sir, would like to see you in his room." Sir Edmund's favourite attitude was to stand with his back to the fireplace, his tall, spare figure very erect, his head thrown back, chin in air, his eyes flashing, and his mouth grim. He was easily moved to wrath. At opposition, neglect of orders, stupidity, as he deemed it, the failure to see a thing from his point of view, he would push his chair back, and, leaving the papers before him, jump up to take his position on the hearthrug, where he had it out with whomsoever had raised his ire. The best way then was to face him and give it to him back, when, if you had any shadow of a case, and could keep your own temper under control, he gradually cooled down, and quietly dropped the discussion.

As a rule, however, Sir Edmund mostly vented his wrath on paper, when he let his pen run freely, having

first dipped it in gall. "Neither an Inspector, nor a Commissioner, nor the Secretary of State himself, has the power to take such a step. The sanction of the Treasury must first be obtained," he reminded me once when I had acted *ultra vires*. It is but fair to add that while he never spared those below, he was full of fight against those above, and stuck to his point sturdily and with great tenacity, when he felt he was right, and it was for the good of the service. Correspondence was incessant, as questions were still hotly debated, and tossed backwards and forwards, and the "jackets," or outer covers, swelled to great bulk with the documents added daily.

Another trait in Sir Edmund was a most retentive memory; he knew what had been said, and by whom, and he kept the registry constantly busy in hunting up and producing former papers—the "f. p.," in technical language—from which he confounded his opponents by recording views they once held, from which they now differed. This resuscitation of something long buried was occasionally embarrassing. I may mention a case in which I was myself concerned. There had been a disturbance in a certain prison chapel, and I was sent to investigate and report. I had come to the conclusion that the quaint appearance of the chaplain in the pulpit, and his rather eccentric sermons, had moved the prison congregation to laughter, and caused a scene, which was injudiciously repressed with too much show of force. This brought the antecedents of the chaplain on the *tapis*, and, upon looking up the record, it was found that he had been appointed on my recommendation. I was taken to task for my want of judgment. Naturally, I could make no defence, although I could have pleaded that ten or fifteen years had elapsed since I had reported favourably on this clergyman, on the strength of one personal interview, and that I had never seen him in the pulpit. More, I could have said that my opinion had been discounted by the express wish of some one in a very high place that the appointment should be made. I wonder how often an official has been in-



conveniently confronted by the ghost of a long forgotten and, perchance, too lightly given opinion?

As time passed, and the work of revision and concentration pressed more and more heavily upon the department, the strength of its chief became more and more apparent. His administration grew into a "one man" rule—he was so masterful, so self-reliant, so self-satisfied, indeed, and saw things so clearly his own way, that he had no advisers, no coadjutors; he would brook no interference, but did everything, so to speak, off his own bat, with the assistance of his own clerks. Yet his colleagues of the same rank as himself were by no means ciphers, and had been specially selected for their ability and fitness to help forward the work in hand. Admiral (afterwards Sir Windham) Hornby, although long past the age for admission to the public service, was well qualified by position and experience to deal with the local magistracy, who, from the first, were expected to give trouble. He was a *persona grata* with Mr. Cross, who, it was said, owed him much for political services, especially in regard to the famous Lancashire election when Mr. Gladstone was defeated, and Mr. Cross began his official life by his appointment as Home Secretary. The Admiral's was a name to conjure with in Lancashire, where, for many years he had acted as agent to Lord Derby on the Knowsley Estate. He won great repute for economic management, and effected notable savings in the household expenses, as the following story will prove. On looking through the contracts for supplies he found that the Stanley family were paying for their tea and sugar, supplied by some long established firm, at the rates which held during the great French war, namely some 13s. or 14s. per lb. for the first, and 6s. and 8s. for the latter—exorbitant prices which were promptly reduced by seventy-five per cent. I may relate another amusing story of his doings at Knowsley. After the manner of the service in which he had been raised this painstaking Naval officer made a point of holding an inspection of all parts of the mansion from time to time, and one day he found himself passing through the kitchen just before afternoon tea. A great pile of buttered toast was



being kept warm before a huge fire, and about half a pound of fresh butter had been placed upon the top to soak through. On making inquiry he was told that the toast was for the housekeeper's room. He very properly took exception to the waste, but consented to overlook the extravagance on condition that the two lowest pieces were served up in the library for his own tea.

A second appointment, very much on all fours with that of the Admiral, was that of Mr. Perry Watlington, a county gentleman in Essex, who had sat for years on the Bench, and been a prominent member of the Quarter Sessions. He had also been actively interested in philanthropic matters and supported, at his own charge, a small reformatory in his own neighbourhood. It fell to my lot to be closely associated with Mr. Watlington, and to work under his direct orders. Although he had had no official experience, and was apt to go astray in official routine, he had sound common-sense and clearly defined opinions, and was one of the pleasantest of men. I had one special reason for being grateful to him, for, as he continued to live at his country house near Harlow, he did not come up to office every day, and, when absent, his papers and general duties had to be dealt with by my brother Inspector, Colonel Hankin, or myself, one of us being always in attendance at the office. This gave us a special insight into matters which seldom came within the ken of our colleagues of the Inspector class, and for a long time we held a certain power and status, our minutes and orders being accepted as our chief's. As Mr. Perry Watlington presently declined in health, and in due course resigned his office, it remained vacant for nearly a year, during which the same thing continued, very profitably for us.

Captain Walter Stopford, the fourth Commissioner, had had a long training in prison work, based upon a distinguished military record; he had been adjutant of the 52nd, had been with it through the siege of Delhi, and had graduated in the best school of discipline and assimilated all its lessons. He had joined the prison department early in life, had passed through the posts of Deputy-

Governor of Portsmouth and Governor of Dartmoor prison, and had been advanced quickly to the highest rank, that of a Director. To the extensive knowledge he had thus acquired, he added the great gift of kindly and consummate tact, and the power to enforce authority and exact obedience quietly and firmly, without being harsh and overbearing. Everyone, colleagues and subordinates, prisoners of every category, had unbounded confidence in him, trusting to his judgment, justice, and fair play. I feel sure that Sir Edmund found in him a pillar of strength, relying on his intimate acquaintance with the prison staff, higher and lower officers, and his familiarity with all the ins and outs of prison administration; he was often guided by him, and listened to him as to no one else, when reminded by him as to what he could and could not do. It was to Captain Stopford, who, when dissensions occurred, and differences of opinion vexed the Board, smoothed things and poured oil on the troubled waters; it was to him the juniors appealed for comfort and support when in difficulty or trouble. No one received wider or deeper sympathy than Captain Stopford when, towards the close of his career, his claims to the chief place in the department were passed by in favour of a younger man.

The first Secretary of the Prison Commission, Mr. (now Sir Robert) Anderson, had long been employed at the Home Office as confidential agent and adviser in regard to Fenian affairs. He had got his hand upon the conspiracy from the first, and was well versed in all its secrets, knew its leaders by heart, and all the movements afoot. The detective instincts thus evoked and fostered pointed him out some years later as a person well qualified to take charge of the whole work of criminal investigation at Scotland Yard, and he served there as Assistant Commissioner of Metropolitan Police from 1885 to 1902. He was a barrister, learned in the law, and had practised in the Irish Courts, so that he was at hand to solve the smaller legal difficulties that cropped up continually. He helped the Commission movement by preparing and publishing an annotated copy of the new Prison (1877) Act, comparing its clauses with those of



the Act it replaced (1805), and commenting on and explaining the changes introduced.

Although the Inspectors were not appointed until the Act came into force in 1878, I may well refer to them here. Three came from the local prison service, Captain Fenwick, R.N., Colonel Hankin, of the Indian Staff Corps, and Captain Wilson; two from the convict prisons, Captain Lennox and myself; and the sixth remaining Inspector, Dr. Briscoe, who had been a military medical man, and had served in the Royal Artillery, was a legacy from the old system. Hitherto there had been two Inspectors, the direct descendants of those appointed years back, when prison reform had been first taken up seriously,\* for the whole of England and Wales, with functions analogous, but which had faded rather into disuse. It was the business of these two Inspectors, who divided the Kingdom between them, to perambulate it once yearly, and report upon the prisons allotted to them, confining themselves to a brief statement of facts, the numbers in custody, the nature of their employment and the amount of their earnings, the quality of the dietaries, and generally upon the conformity to the Acts in force and the principles of control laid down. It was their principal duty to "certify" the cells in which prisoners were lodged as conforming to the conditions laid down by various Acts of Parliament. Should the Inspectors have reason to find fault if the cells were defective, if they were dissatisfied with the management, or thought the rules of conduct were neglected, it was their duty to call the attention of the Secretary of State to the fact, and it rested with the latter to exercise the powers vested in him to withhold the State subvention accorded by Parliament to each local prison. It was a roundabout process, and the representation of shortcomings was slow and difficult. A much more active and searching supervision, as will be seen, was instituted under the new Act.

It was laid down as a fundamental principle, which I believe still holds, that the Inspectors should be men of

\* In 1836-7.



practical training and experience. My first colleagues could well claim to possess this qualification. Captain (afterwards Admiral) Fenwick, had been for many years Governor of the Shrewsbury Gaol; he was a bluff, hearty sailor, combining the strictness of the naval disciplinarian with great considerateness in his treatment of the prison class. Colonel Hankin, who came to the Home Office from the Governorship of the Hertford Gaol, had learnt his prison lessons when Governor and Inspector in Madras, and his manner and methods were tinged with the arbitrary spirit acquired in a country where so great a gulf divides the dominant from the subject race. He had a rough exterior, a positive manner, an incisive tongue; officers feared and prisoners disliked him, but he was always fair to the latter, and his strictness with the former was inspired by his set purpose to maintain a high standard of efficiency. Captain Wilson had been Governor of Gloucester and Maidstone Gaols in succession, and his earlier years had been spent in the Army—many of them on the staff, in Natal. He knew everything there was to know about prison management, had original ideas, and the power of expressing them fluently and forcibly, so that his papers and reports at times quite equalled our chief's in length and minuteness. He was endowed with a rare sweetness of disposition, was ever the courtly mannered gentleman, beloved by his colleagues and subordinates, and respected by the prisoners, who seldom, if ever, took advantage of his kindly demeanour. Captain Lennox had succeeded me in the Governorship of the Gibraltar Convict Prison, and had subsequently been in charge of Borstal Prison. It was urged against him, equally with myself, that we had no acquaintance with the local prisons, and the charge could not be gainsaid; I am free to confess that I was often astray in my ignorance of minor technicalities, especially with regard to courts and jurisdictions. But a prison is a prison all the world over, and there is no great mystery about its management, if approached by anyone properly grounded in the business. At least we could claim to be unprejudiced, to have an open mind, and to be honestly anxious to help the new system

forward, and work it on broad, intelligent lines. Captain Lennox had, amongst other useful traits, a most methodical spirit; he had the gift of order strongly developed, and in a new business, where a main object was to secure uniformity in all details, his services were most valuable. He was a law to himself as well as to others. His rigid insistence upon the strict observance of rule and regulation was amusingly illustrated in the organisation of his daily life. He did everything by rule. Punctually, at exactly the same hour he started for his constitutional, lit his cigar at the same hour, turned homewards as the clock struck, and so forth. He was a model to us in preparing, digesting, and recording the facts he gathered on his inspection, and was always a mine to draw upon for information.

I have not included one other Inspector in these little sketches, because he discharged special functions. This was Dr. Gover, the Medical Inspector\* who had won promotion by his exhaustive report on prison dietaries, and by his long and meritorious services as a prison surgeon. There is no finality in prison dietaries. Dr. Gover's scale, that adopted in 1878, did not hold the ground for more than twenty years.

\* I have already spoken of him at Millbank. See page 196.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## A NEW ERA.

Striving after Uniformity in Prison Management—The "Prisoner's Record"—A Big Blunder—Evolving a Model System of Account-keeping—Prison Industries—Prisons as Factories for the Public Services—The Governor's Perquisites under the Old *Régime*—Wakefield and other Local Prisons Described—The Difference between Then and Now—Prison Hospitals—Dilatory Routine and its Consequences.

MY connection with the new order of things began with a summons to the Home Office one day in anticipation of my appointment in the *Gazette*, when I was told that the Commissioners wished me to undertake the unification of the books and printed forms in use in the prisons. Captain Wilson was associated with me in the task, which was one of some magnitude. The total number of local prisons at that time was upwards of one hundred, and one and all had their own ideas of carrying out the daily routine. No two sets of "forms" were alike, they varied in almost every particular, from the "unlocking" report in the morning to the "night locking" when the day was ended, the prisoners were put away, and the prison was finally closed. Things were done differently everywhere: the plan of entering new arrivals at the reception ward, of recording their distinctive mark, and taking stock of their private property, the methods of discharging when sentences were worked out, all varied. Governors and chaplains kept daily journals each his own way; one kept one kind of punishment book or character book, and another, another.

To bring all this into line, to substitute one, if possible the best and most complete form, while minimising all clerical work, not only exercised our patience and ingenuity, but was accomplished with a certain foreknowledge that



we should probably please no one. To accept the system in any one prison was to rouse the jealousy of a dozen others. Such jealousy existed strongly in prisons side by side in the same town, under county or borough jurisdiction, and I was soon told, say by Leeds: "You are coming Wakefield over us," or Kirkdale objected to be led by Walton, or the small prisons protested that they found Metropolitan practices were utterly unsuitable and unworkable.

Fortunately we were well backed by the Commissioners. Sir Edmund gave us his personal support, for he had a curious liking for the work, and, despite the incessant calls upon his attention for much greater and more serious matters, he gave much time to the preparation of "forms," the fitting in of lines and spaces, so as to present facts and figures most plainly, and provide the fullest information. He would alter proof after proof; one form, "the Prisoner's Record," was changed at least twenty times. This was a document I had adopted from a plan long used at Wakefield, the great prison of the West Riding, but really having its origin in the "penal record" of the convict service, a still more voluminous affair, by which the whole of the particulars of a prisoner were collected within one cover—something akin to the French "livret," or our soldier's small book—his whole personal history, with parentage, next of kin, trade, distinctive marks, his criminal career, his previous convictions, his fresh misdeeds, his prison conduct, the disposal of his time in custody, his health, his prison earnings, and the private property he brought in with him; in a word, everything connected with him, every detail, was entered with accuracy and minuteness. The "Record" replaced a dozen or more different books and registers, which must have been searched with infinite labour to ascertain facts which could now be seen easily, and almost at the first glance. We took enormous pains with the planning and perfecting of this form, and I can well remember the keen disappointment with which I received it when returned to me time after time by the Chief, all scored over with erasures and fresh insets in red ink. When at last it was passed, printed, and sent out, tentatively, it was long in making its

way. Hostile criticism met it in many places, objections were freely raised, one of the chief being that it entailed increased clerical labour, and this had never been absent from Sir Edmund Du Cane's mind, so much so that he never heartily recommended it until its value was gradually, though often most reluctantly, admitted. It was, however, admitted at last, and the form is still, I believe, in use, though modified and improved, no doubt.

My connection with forms was not limited to the paper routine of the prison. It extended to the codification and simplification of the prison rules, drawn up by the several authorities under the directions and in obedience to the provisions of the various Acts in force. These regulations had been submitted to, and had received the sanction of, Parliament, and they had a strong family likeness, but the language differed, and the methods of setting them forth. It was necessary to bring them into line, and I rushed in on the dangerous ground a little too boldly, for, after they had been drawn up and approved, it was found that the formality of subjecting them to the criticism of the law officers had been omitted, and they were subsequently altered and revised. I must here confess to an inexcusable oversight, which caused much outcry, and drew down on me very well merited animadversion. I had gone carefully through the proofs of the new rules to be issued, but only as they were applicable to males; I had overlooked those for females, and, in one point at least, that of labour, there was an essential difference. The formula for males began with: "Hard labour of the first class shall consist of treadwheel, stone breaking, heavy crank, etc., etc." Through my inexcusable carelessness, precisely the same words were used in the printed regulations for females, and it went forth to the shocked and surprised world that under the new *régime* female prisoners were to work the treadwheel and break stones. This grievous error was promulgated, moreover, at a moment when the Prison Commissioners were otherwise in hot water and incurring much odium for their barbarous devices, such as the infliction of the plank bed, which, as a matter of fact, was nothing



new, and was already largely used by the local authorities. Of course the offending rules were immediately withdrawn, and I was very handsomely treated by my superiors, who took the blame upon the department, when they would have been quite justified in giving me up to reprobation as the author of such a grievous mistake.

Long years afterwards, towards the close of my active service, I was again concerned with the books and forms in use, and now with a view to diminishing their number. It was found possible to reduce them very considerably. Many had become obsolete or unnecessary; others had been planned on too large and elaborate a scale. Among these last might be included one book, provided by the Stationery Office, the "Death Register." It is a well-known fact that the death rate in prisons is not high. Nevertheless, in one case the officials were so anxious that sufficient space should be afforded for the entry of deaths, that the register, it was calculated, would serve for 1,700 years!

As I am on the subject of administration, I may refer here to the steps taken to introduce one financial system throughout the prisons. The methods of book-keeping and accounts were very varied, and it was essential that, as all expenditure would in future be borne by public funds, its disbursement, entry, and general control should accord with the usages and procedure laid down by the Treasury. Accordingly a small Committee was appointed, composed of Mr. Fagan, Director of Convict Prisons, Mr. Richard Mills, of H.M. Treasury, and myself. Our Secretary was Mr. James Duncan, a prison accountant of long experience, who afterwards became Comptroller of Industries at the Home Office. Of Mr. Fagan I have already spoken; his intimate knowledge of stores and accounts had been gained in a commissariat office of high standing. Mr. Mills was one of the most trusted of the senior officials at the Treasury, and he subsequently became Sir Richard, and Auditor-General at Somerset House. We were styled the Committee of Accounts, but we had a wide mandate, as was shown by the instructions issued to us. We were to consider: "(1) How the prison accounts had been kept, how



they should be kept in future, and what staff would be needed for the purpose; (2) the best method of purchasing raw material for prison industries, and of disposing of the goods manufactured; and (3) how to secure the largest returns from prisoners' labour, and develop prison manufactures of the greatest extent." Our task was comprehensive, and in fulfilling it we were compelled to take up so many topics, and deal with them so minutely, that our Committee presently gained the sobriquet of the "Mincing Machine."

The visitation of the most important prisons was our first step, and we travelled up and down the country continually, engaged in comparing and digesting the existing systems, so as to evolve one that would best answer the requirements of the public service. My colleagues were experts in the business, trained from their youth upwards in the science of accounts, practised in handling figures on the most effective plan, in securing precision and straight-dealing with all the checks and counter checks of independent audit, and by vigorous insistence upon the production of vouchers.

I find, in looking back upon the reports we rendered, the following summary of the state of things existent when we began our inquiry:—

"An examination into the various systems discloses great variety of practice, and many objectionable methods of procedure. Thus, in one prison no entries were made in the public cash book till the end of the month. In the same prison provision books were balanced weekly, miscellaneous store books annually, but there had been no general stock-taking for twenty years. In several prisons no accounts were kept to show the profit and loss on trade and manufactures; in others, crude efforts were made, which were either incomplete or quite illusory. Sometimes trade officers, such as tailor, shoemaker, or sewing mistress, helped themselves to materials from store, and no record or entries were made in the store ledger. There was no periodical balancing of cash or store ledgers. One storekeeper had been in the habit of paying in cheques for goods sold, etc., to his own private banking account; he kept no books to show what he

received, but handed over a lump sum by cheque to the Governor at the close of every month.

"Again, in many cases the importance of proper checks upon stores was quite overlooked. Cash accounts monopolised most of the clerical labour of the prison, while the stores were comparatively neglected; yet there are generally much larger sums at stake in the store department than in the cash. This neglect was variously and curiously shown. In many prisons the storerooms were opened by ordinary discipline keys, and all discipline officers had access to them. There was in some cases no distinct responsibility as to stores; thus, at one place the store ledgers were posted from what were virtually duplicate ledgers kept by the reception warder. The gatekeeper took notes of goods received, and supplied the information by which their receipt was checked. At another prison the store ledgers were kept in the Governor's office from information supplied by the storekeeper, who, in his turn, obtained much of his information from the gatekeeper. The storekeeper and gatekeeper were supposed to be a check upon each other, yet they furnished each other with the records by which the check was made. No attempt was made to carry out periodical condemnation of stores, nor to ensure their destruction when condemned.

"In case of provisions, the practice was often exceedingly faulty. Cooks in some prisons were entrusted with almost unlimited and irresponsible powers. One cook was allowed strange emoluments in the shape of being allowed to dine off a part of the prisoners' food, or to receive a pint of porter daily. The cook drew provisions just as he required them. An excess of wastage was frequently allowed; thus twenty-five per cent. upon potatoes had been allowed, when eight or ten would have sufficed. A mistaken idea upon diet scale having been corrected, the change in this respect at one prison will save £350 a year. Very crude notions exist as to how the soup should be cooked, and a further waste in flour for puddings occurred by allowing unnecessary percentage to cover weighing out the puddings, which might have been avoided by using pudding tins to hold each ration."



The conclusion we drew from this great diversity of practice, and the many obvious shortcomings, was that it was essential that one uniform method of procedure should be introduced, "such as would comply with the requirements of the Exchequer and Audit Acts, and be similar to that in force in other branches of the public service." We recommended that all store and manufacturing accounts should be assimilated, and one simple system of book-keeping be adopted under our personal supervision. This must necessarily be a slow process, and it would be imperative to instruct subordinates, who were to carry it out, very thoroughly in the new principles. For this purpose, a number of competent officers were selected, and collected at Cold Bath Fields (London), and formed into a class, under our assistant, Mr. Duncan, who carefully explained to them the details of the new system, taking them patiently through the whole of the new books and forms, and all the new arrangements for dealing with cash and stores. By degrees the necessary education was imparted to the whole of the clerical staff, which was revised and recast, so as to ensure the presence at every prison of an officer thoroughly well trained, and adequate to meet the new requirements. There was on hand a large nucleus of good men, only waiting to be put in the right road, who were willing and eager to give their best efforts; and at the same time steps were taken to provide a supply of others to succeed them, from among the most suitable candidates in the Civil Service. As time passed, a certain stagnation in promotion set in, and caused some discontent amongst those who suffered from hope deferred. It was decided to enlarge the field of service by admitting them to the Governor class, and not a few have since risen to positions of much greater responsibility and emolument.

I have said that the whole question of prison industries was brought under our view, and received adequate consideration. Much feeling had been shown, by a party not slow to express its dissatisfaction over the alleged competition between free labour and prison labour, and particularly in one particular trade, that of mat-making,



which was so very largely followed in gaols as to interfere with honest folk outside given to the same pursuit. It was conveniently forgotten that this enterprise was originally invented in prison. It was created, I believe, by a Governor of Wakefield, the West Riding gaol, Mr. Shepperd by name, the first of the family of Shepperds, long and meritoriously associated with gaol management. One or more of them were, indeed, surviving when we took over the prisons. A great impetus was given to the manufacture of mats at Wakefield, which was admirably suited for the employment of prisoners. It was sedentary, it could be worked in cellular separation, and was very distinctly profitable. In due course, however, Mr. Shepperd, as I have been told, retired from the service, and embarked on the business as a private concern on his own account. He had many imitators; labour, in the first instance prison taught, was abundant, and the industry flourished and prospered exceedingly. The time arrived when it became strong enough if not to claim exactly a vested interest, at least to agitate against the supposed competition of establishments supported by rates, and enjoying the advantages of capital and the cheapest labour. Already the Government had yielded to the extent of forbidding the manufacture of mats in the prisons controlled by the State, and now that the whole of the local establishments were to be included in the same category, we knew that mat-making, as well as all other industries practised in the open market, must disappear.

The centre and headquarters of the mat-making industry was still Wakefield prison, where the commercial enterprise of its controlling magistrates had brought about a great development of the trade. It was backed up by steam power, a very costly and expensive plant, and the results obtained during the first year of the new authority, before we were in a position to make any change, were very substantial. The daily average number of prisoners employed at mat making, or preparing for it, was just 600, and the net profits on their labour amounted to £6,333, a sufficiently substantial output to justify the many complaints made. Our Committee saw at once that some remedy must

be applied, and quickly decided to divert the labour and machinery from the mat-making, that had hitherto almost exclusively monopolised them, into other channels. Wakefield is a district much given to woollen manufactures, and the prison afforded peculiar facilities for making blankets and rugs for the public service. No time was lost in recommending this, and a large number of looms were thrown off mat-making and applied to other manufactures. Wakefield could now no longer be said to compete with private enterprise, nor to swamp the smaller prisons, which could still be permitted to turn out a limited number of mats. Within a few years the weaving of cloth for uniforms and prison apparel was added, and the output of mats practically ceased.

The principle introduced at Wakefield was adopted elsewhere, and has been steadily pursued ever since. Prison labour is utilised as little as possible in producing goods for the public market. The first beginnings, as seen at Wakefield, of blanket and rug-making for army service, were soon expanded into the supply of other goods for public departments, and the production of all manner of articles in use in the prison. Boots, shoes, and belts are turned out in large quantities. The Royal Navy is a constant customer for hammocks and coal sacks, the Post Office for canvas mail bags, and the hundred and one articles in daily use, the stamps and pads, and the boxes, to be seen on every Post Office counter. The army, again, demands bed cases and articles of field equipment.

I cannot leave this part of the subject without reference to other points commended to our consideration, such as the purchasing of raw material, the sale of goods manufactured, and the best methods of fostering prison industries. In these matters also we found a great diversity of practice.

"Governors of prisons had purchased raw material in various ways; some in the open market far or near, some wholesale, some retail, some dealing with the same people always at much the same rates. As to sales, again, each individual authority had no object but to do the best trade and make the most money for itself. This led to a keen competition between prisons, with the result of playing into



purchasers' hands. Travellers and prison agents continually interfered with each other's prices, underselling and bidding against each other whenever they could. Sales were effected variously—to wholesale dealers at a distance, to persons in the immediate neighbourhood, or in that of other prisons—and nearly all prisons alike kept shops on their premises, and did a retail trade.

"It was patent to the Committee that the substitution of some unified system, under central control, for these processes, was highly desirable. As to purchases, they thought that raw material ought to be bought wholesale by the Commissioners, on the plan of competing tender or contract, believing that a large public department could always secure better terms than a number of small officials, each dealing on his own account. They thought also that contractors might be permitted to send in their own raw material to be worked up, paying only for the labour expended therein. As for sales, they saw grave objection to most of the practices in vogue, condemning agents and middlemen, disliking the plan of 'touting' or travelling for orders, being opposed also to a retail trade. The only satisfactory method of disposal seemed to them such as might be carried out by an official of authority, established at headquarters, in the office of the Commissioners, by whom schedules of prices would be prepared, to prevent competition, who would take up and utilise the various trade connections, who would superintend sales to large dealers, and manipulate the goods as they became available, by dispatching them here and there according to the demands of the various districts."

We had other views, which seemed to us worth trial, although, I may say at once, practical difficulties militated against their adoption. We thought that a regular return might be got from the prisoners' labour by grouping prisoners together according to trade. This concentration was to follow local facilities. We suggested that the shoemakers should be sent to Warwick, Northampton, and Leicester, the stocking knitters also to the last-named place, the strawplaiters to Northampton. At the same time, it was proposed that certain prisons should be made centres for



manufacturing particular articles for the general supply of prison needs. Holloway was well adapted for the tailoring trade; Wandsworth, with its flour mills, would grind wheat for everybody; the Midland prisons might make boots and shoes; Kirkdale and Salford, in the cotton country, should weave sheeting, shirting, and material for female garments; Wakefield, for reasons already given, would provide blankets and rugs. The scheme was sound, but was never fully adopted, because of the practical difficulties. There was first the expense of removal from place to place, to which was soon added a more sentimental objection, that prisoners sent out of their own district were unable to see or communicate with their friends outside, a grievance that was allowed to weigh, although the transfer of prisoners to meet the demands for space, from overcrowded to empty prisons that is to say, had been from the first a chief advantage claimed for the new system.

The strongest objection of all, however, was that there were seldom a sufficient number of prisoners with sentences long enough to recoup the cost of moving to and fro. The bulk of the prisoners who find their way into the local gaols are little more than birds of passage. If we take the last figures published by the Prison Commissioners (Report 1902—3), we find that out of a total of 177,907 prisoners, male and female, received into local prisons, there were 169,205 with sentences of less than three months. "Going further," they said, "we find that this total is made up of 26,603 undergoing terms of six weeks and over five weeks; 44,367 of a fortnight and over a week; 48,010 of one week; 9,397 of five days; 1,237 of four days; 5,866 of three days; and a small residuum of two days and one day." These statistics are given a little differently in the body of the same report, where it is stated that "thirty-six per cent. of the males and forty per cent. of the females were sentenced to one week or less; sixty-one per cent. of the males and sixty-six per cent. of the females to two weeks or less; ninety-four per cent. of the males and ninety-eight per cent. of the females to three months or less."

This experience is by no means limited to this country.

I find from some figures I prepared a few years back that in Belgium in one year, out of 18,000 sentences, ranging between one and fifteen days, half were for less than three days, and that in Germany, out of 250,172 sentences of imprisonment, 183,195 were for less than three months, and 117,980 for less than one month. Of course, I do not base on these figures any plea for greater severity in dealing with offenders, but I would point out that no sort of industrial results can be obtained from men subjected to prison discipline for such brief spaces of time. The reformatory effect (always, as I think, illusory) must in these cases be positively *nil*; while, as a deterrent, the punishment, which, as the phrase goes, "a man can do on his head" must be worthless. From the industrial point of view, nothing can be expected; rough, unskilled manual labour, such as stone breaking or oakum picking, is the only possible employment; no instruction can be imparted in even the simplest handicrafts; moreover, the tradesman or artisan cannot legally be permitted to use his knowledge outside his cell in the early days of his incarceration.

The rule was strictly laid down in a Schedule of the 1865 Act, providing that every prisoner must spend his first month in strict separation and at hard labour, but it was constantly infringed at the local prisons, as we found on taking them over. There was always the temptation to utilise a good tradesman when he lost his freedom. The Governor was always keen to turn his services to the best account. I know of a case in which a penal servitude convict was detained in a county prison for the whole five years of his sentence; he was an excellent carpenter, and his name was never sent up for removal to the public works. In minor ways the forfeited skill was applied to the production of articles for private use. This was the Governor's perquisite with written, more often unwritten, sanction. His wardrobe was replenished when a good tailor came in; the children got new boots and shoes and the lady a new bonnet when clever workers went wrong and were locked up. I might mention a Governor who was very proud of the carriage turned out by a clever coach builder, who came in



twice, and completed his work on the second conviction, having too little time on the first!

All these practices were stopped summarily under the new *régime*. The misuse of prison labour, the exclusive property of the State, was an unpardonable offence in the eyes of Sir Edmund Du Cane. He cut off remorselessly the prisoner gardeners and the prisoner stableman, and issued stringent orders that no work should be undertaken in the prison shops for prison officers, no material drawn upon for other than public demands. I never saw a man so pleased as when he ferreted out a concealed waste pipe in one prison kitchen, which ended in the Governor's pig trough, and conveyed direct to the fortunate animals the refuse which should have been sold to some outside contractor, for the benefit of the Exchequer.

On the whole the prisons bore witness to an earnest attempt of their managers to adopt the plans and principles of prison construction now universally accepted and authorised by Act of Parliament. Separate cellular confinement was laid down as the rule and enforced everywhere, at least, in theory, and not seldom in practice. When accommodation ran short, large rooms were still used for a number, or three prisoners were located in the same cell, three invariably, for to leave two men alone together was never permitted. In most of the prisons I visited, however, I found a more or less adequate provision of modern cells, complying with the statutory regulations, failing which they were not "certifiable" according to law by H.M. Inspectors, and to occupy them without that certificate would have been an offence and misdemeanour. The conditions were set forth with great minuteness. As we read them we realise how jealously the power to put men away into complete isolation was guarded by the legislature. It was expressly forbidden to use any "cell for the separate confinement of a prisoner unless it was certified by one of H.M. Inspectors of Prisons to be of the proper size, to be lighted, warmed, ventilated, and fitted up in such a manner as may be requisite for health, and furnished with the means of enabling the prisoner to communicate at any time with an officer of the



prison." It was enacted that there must be cells provided equal to the average greatest number in custody during the previous five years.

Everywhere I found new and converted buildings containing cells of the proper modern pattern, crowded, some of them, into narrow limits, and, at vast expense, replacing ancient, and often most massive constructions; others which had room and verge enough were spread out on large lines with considerable architectural pretensions. I will give precedence to the latter, and will more especially instance Wakefield, the West Riding prison, which had long been under the fostering care of an enlightened, enterprising authority, ever anxious to bring its establishment up to the highest standard of efficiency. Reference has just been made to the development of prison industries, to the unstinting expenditure on plant, and the extensive trade done, with such substantial returns. Wakefield was worked very much as a manufactory, managed by hard-headed Yorkshire business men, and trade might be called a first consideration with them. But they desired also to conform to the law, and were willing to do so without hesitation or niggardliness. The "prison proper" was an imposing structure, covering many acres and fulfilling the most rigorous conditions. It was built according to the latest received method, according to the "cartwheel" or radiating principle, with several "spoke-like" blocks radiating from the "hub," or centre hall, and it provided in all 1,231 cells for males, and 224 for females. There was another prison, now disestablished and disused, available for emergencies, but only for short service prisoners.

The whole of the establishment was run on a grand scale. In the one item of staff it was furnished with ten per cent. of officers, while it had been fixed by the new *régime* that five per cent. should suffice, as in the "close" convict prisons—and to bring down the total to the limits imposed was the hardest and most irksome task that fell to me in the work of administration. It was a large staff and a highly paid staff, the rates much above the Government scale, and this added to the need for reduc-

tion in numbers, for by the 1877 Act vested interests were rigorously respected, and no man, whatever his rank or status, was to be one penny the worse off under the new system. The only way to reduce the cost of a Wakefield officer was to promote him elsewhere, to receive the higher pay of a grade above that he held, or pension him off—not always easy, for the outgoing prison authority had to pay the pension, and, naturally, did not agree to the retirement of men still fit to serve. They were liberal, open-handed masters, the Yorkshire magistrates, and treated their servants well. The Governor and Chaplain lived in fine quarters, and had great plots of garden ground (within the walls), which were cultivated for them by prisoners, and irrigated by water raised by the prison treadwheel; comfortable cottages were dotted all over the prison estate for the rest of the staff, who enjoyed many peculiar privileges, free grants of fuel, the right to purchase goods manufactured in the prison at reduced rates, and particularly bread, the product of the prison bakery. Thanks to a patent acquired by the management, it was far superior to any that could be bought in the neighbourhood. I believe that at that time, and it may be so still, there were but few bakers' shops in the small towns, as the Yorkshire housewife baked her own bread.

Durham had a fine, large modern prison, and there were two other large Yorkshire prisons of the Wakefield class, a little behind it, perhaps, and on a much smaller scale, the borough prisons of Leeds and Hull. The first had cells for 359 males and 142 females; it was within the city, in the district of Armley, a tall, castellated edifice, that might have dated back to the dark ages, and rose black and grimly forbidding in the prevailing murkiness of the coal-laden atmosphere. Within, it followed the latest plan, it was a little Wakefield, active in industrial manufacture, but without the use of steam power. The Hull prison of 264 males and 125 females, of quite modern construction, rejoiced in an energetic Governor, very keen on developing the productive labour of his charges. He showed much ingenuity and



enterprise in devising new outlets, one of which I remember particularly, that of sugar chopping. The local grocers had found that customers disliked the neatly cut or sliced cube white sugar so familiar to all who have frequented a foreign *café*, and were in the habit of employing their assistants to break the loaf sugar irregularly, such as we see it in daily domestic use. Our Hull Governor had introduced a wide industry in "chopping," which was carried out by individual prisoners, each at his own little table, with a hammer wielded as in ordinary stone breaking. One of the chief drawbacks to this business was the succulence of the material. It was impossible to check pilfering, until (as with grocers and confectioners in private life) satiety followed the unlimited consumption allowed. Free sugar was too toothsome and tempting an article when taken in conjunction with the limited prison dietary, and the surreptitious consumption, which no amount of "report" and punishment could check, frequently interfered seriously with the profits of the industry.

There were smaller prisons deserving of the highest praise. The county prison at Lincoln, designed for that particular division known as the "Parts of Lindsey," and situated on the high road, was a beautiful building of handsome elevation, and admirably planned with every modern improvement and appliance. It served for 159 males and 43 females. Southwell, again, for the Newark division of the county of Nottingham, had a single excellent block, so had Northallerton in the North Riding, and Scarborough owned a small modern gaol for 41 males and 25 females. The foregoing were the best within my especial province, but later, when my inspection extended to the whole Kingdom, I found them equalled, if not excelled, by such prisons as—taking the largest first—Walton (Liverpool borough), Strangeways, for the Salford county, Preston, Cardiff, Birmingham, Stafford, Exeter, Winchester, Lewes, and, in the metropolis, Wandsworth and Holloway. Of smaller prisons among the best were Bedford, Cambridge, St. Albans, Ruthin, Grantham, Reading, and Bodmin.

In marked contrast to these were many inferior prisons,



handicapped, it may be, by site or narrow means, or suffering from the lack of public spirit in those responsible for them. Newcastle prison was in the most crowded and not the best part of the town, and for years it had been debated whether it should not be demolished, and a new prison erected on another site. I attended more than one conference with the local magnates, who made me a liberal offer of land on the Town Moor, if the Government would consent to defray the cost of the new buildings. How, or why, exactly the negotiations fell through, I cannot say, but I believe the Town Moor of Newcastle was soon applied to other purposes, and I know that Sir Edmund Du Cane hesitated to embark on the expense. In any case, the old gaol stands, with such alterations as have been introduced from time to time. I found one principal block of two hundred cells jammed in between the chapel and the boundary wall, which was almost within arm's length, cells of which one whole floor was in the basement, and below the ground level, and so dark as to be almost uninhabitable, but the upper cells were perfectly suitable and above criticism. Side by side were some remarkable survivals of the past; several blocks of John Howard's time, the exterior of blackened, weather-worn stone, small windows deep set and heavily barred, iron doors with weighty chains and mammoth bolts and locks that shot back with a huge effort and portentous clang. Within, dark, narrow passages, and winding stone staircases, leading down to dungeon-like *oubliettes*, belonging to mediæval times. When it became necessary to cut into the walls to give light and air and practicable passage, the labour entailed was immense and exceedingly costly. At last the fiat went forth that these useless encumbrances should be entirely swept away, and it was only the fear of too extensive and far reaching damage that prevented the use of dynamite for the purpose.

Another prison that might seem to claim the same antiquity was that of York, of which I have spoken before. It stood on ancient foundations, but the prison itself was a comparatively modern construction, dating from the third or fourth decade of the 19th century, and owed its

origin to the dominant influence of the famous Sydney Smith, when he was a clerical magistrate in the near neighbourhood of York, although, even then, as he has told us himself, he lived on the outskirts of civilisation, and was "nine miles from a lemon." He had thrown himself with characteristic energy into the business of prison management, and when systems were hotly discussed, carried his colleagues with him in accepting that of Auburn, in the State of New York, which favoured cellular separation at night, with associated labour during the day. To achieve this, a prison was built at exceeding cost, which provided sleeping accommodation for barely a hundred and sixty inmates, and a number of sheds and yards for occupation during the day. Such cells! There was barely room to stand up in them, much less turn round; the doors of solid iron, with hanging chains and enormous bolts, would have withstood an enemy with sledge hammers and battering rams. Half the cell was taken up by an iron bedstead, let into the wall, and usurping too much space, and cutting down the supplies of light and air to the lowest terms. The work was Titanic, Cyclopean; the walls were built of huge blocks of stone, tons in weight. The small windows were closed with a network of forged ironwork, that quite defied the efforts of chisel and file. The whole area was surrounded by a boundary wall as solid as the great wall of China, or the defences of a mediæval fortress, which no fugitive could have scaled, and nothing but modern artillery could have breached or beaten down. The whole erection was so inordinately wasteful and extravagant, planned on a scale so absurdly out of keeping with the objects for which it was intended, that it was long known as the greatest joke Sydney Smith ever made.

Several buildings of older construction were included within the precincts of the latest prison. There was one national monument, Clifford's Tower, which dated from the time of Athelstan, and which had been a stronghold of both Saxons and Normans, and was still a place of pilgrimage to the archæologist and the local sightseer. A fine assize court, with a noble façade, filled one side of the enclosure. Near by were the old debtors' and criminal prisons, ex-



ternally handsome, but great, rambling, many-roomed premises, still used partially, and for the most part unsuitable for prison purposes. Debtors were a large class, for although the fiction now existed that imprisonment for debt was abolished, great numbers were committed for defiance or contempt of an order made for payment. They came to York from all parts of the great county, and I have seen as many as fifty or sixty lounging about in idleness, for, by our early rules, they could not be called upon to work; if they chose, they could have their food sent in by their friends, or they took the prison allowance, which, in their case, was on a higher scale than for the rest of the prisoners.\*

Chancery debtors, committed for contempt, were also to be found in York Castle, and kept there for long periods. I was much interested in one who had been contumacious about certain papers, and whose release I secured with the greatest difficulty.

A prison on all fours with York Castle, although of greater antiquity, was Lancaster Castle, which had a long and curious history. I was not associated with this in my early duty, but I came to know it, and had ample opportunity for inspecting and studying its archives. The castle was of Roman foundation, and had been a fortress and place of durance through the ages, had varied in allegiance, and owned many different masters. Norwich Castle was a square castellated edifice, fitted very imperfectly for a prison, and now very properly applied to other uses, as a

\* The number of debtors was always large at York on account of the widespread practices of the "menage men," as they were called. These were hawkers or packmen, who perambulated the country districts tempting weak housewives to buy goods on credit. They caught the easily beguiled female with some showy piece of stuff, and most obligingly offered it on credit, or to be paid for by instalments. The purchase was kept secret from the breadwinner, and when the inevitable demand came he was still unaware of the debt. The reckless wife would conceal the County Court notices served on her husband, and it happened not uncommonly that the poor man's first knowledge came upon him with the shock of arrest. I have seen men brought in by the bailiffs just as they had been taken—railway porters in their uniform hauled off from the platforms, and policemen from their beats.



local museum. Lincoln Castle, again, and Chester Castle were ancient buildings, the survival of times when the feudal authority wielded rights extending to life and limb, and could freely lock up offenders.

There were other prisons in my survey, when in due course it became general and took in the whole of the Kingdom, which were interesting from historical associations or from their construction. The old-fashioned gate house and feudal tower had disappeared, and the noisome underground dens laid bare by John Howard, but here and there prisons survived indicating the first awakenings of conscience in those responsible for the carrying out of legal penalties. Some pointed to the days when it was thought right that the gaoler should live in the heart of his gaol, the centre of a circle, drawn around with bricks and mortar, as in Devizes, and, in a way, at Morpeth; nevertheless at both good accommodation was afforded. At Gloucester I found the gaol built obviously upon the plan of that great prison at Ghent which Howard eulogised, and which I visited when inspecting the Belgian prisons for my own edification and amusement.

I found gaols with windows on to the street, and it was easy to imagine the prisoners leaning out of them to fish for alms. Small prisons, with no more than a handful of prisoners, Berwick-on-Tweed, an old-fashioned "lock up," with five and twenty cells, and with a daily average of less than ten; Ripon ("Liberty") with about the same; Poole, in Dorsetshire, having six certified and twelve uncertified cells, and a daily average of half a dozen inmates; Hereford city with thirty, Nottingham county thirty-three, Oakham thirty-six, all uncertified; Wymondham (Norfolk), for female only, with thirty cells and a daily average of half the number. Sandwich had its own borough prison of fourteen uncertified cells, and Peterborough Liberty thirty-seven; Stamford Borough, a prison of sixteen cells. All these were for the most part patched up and pieced out, and sanctioned to meet modern requirements, but still falling very short of the ideal. They were the last vestiges of that sturdy spirit that prompted every locality to manage its own affairs, and

multiplied jurisdictions throughout the country. When the Prison Act of 1877 came into force there were only 113 of these, but just a century before John Howard enumerated 244, and he had not visited all; in 1837, when the first Inspectors got to work, the total was 256, which they reduced to nearly half; and to-day (1904) there are only fifty-four, all of them of like pattern, and uniform in discipline and management.

If proof were needed of the improvement in prison administration under the present *régime*, it might be seen in the work of reconstruction and unification steadily followed for nearly thirty years. The old unsightly and unsuitable "local" gaols have been swept entirely away, or converted into places of durance fulfilling the best modern conditions. Handsome new prisons have been built wherever necessary; a fine block at York, a new prison at Nottingham in the open country a couple of miles from the crowded town, another at Dorchester, and one at Norwich, on the heights above the city; much patient care has been expended, and much public money, in assimilating the internal arrangements and bringing them to a general level. Domestic and family arrangements are no longer mixed up in the government of gaols; the gaoler no longer lives inside with his children and his servants, and his dogs, the gaoler's wife is no longer the matron, sons and daughters no longer assist as turnkeys and in other prison posts. The "gate" is now a guard room pure and simple, where watch and ward is kept by an officer on duty for a certain number of hours, and the "lock" is not attended to by a resident gatekeeper, whose wife or children might handle the precious "key," as sometimes happens at the lodge of a gentleman's park.

Whoever visits one of His Majesty's prisons nowadays, whether brought there, or coming of his own free will, finds the same formalities everywhere. The prisoner, when he descends from the Black Maria, is taken straight to the reception ward, which is organised everywhere on the same plan, and goes through precisely the same processes. He divests himself of his private clothes, surrenders his personal belongings, is introduced to a bath, dressed (if convicted) in



the same conventional, not to say hideous, garb, is seen by the doctor, classed for labour, and passed on to the prison proper. If the new arrival is out of health he is removed to a hospital laid out on the best plan, and with every convenience and modern requisite. The provision for dealing with the sick and ailing was by no means all that could be desired in the old gaols. I can call to mind many hospitals that did not deserve the name, dark, ill ventilated, badly warmed, hidden away in remote corners, down in the basements, or in the garrets. There were very few resident surgeons, except in some of the largest establishments, such as Wakefield and Walton, although the chaplain was always lodged on the premises—pointing clearly to the principles in the ascendant, when ghostly ministrations were brought to bear before the preservation of health; the care of the soul was thought to be more needed by wrongdoers than that of the feeble body, too often the cause of the crime. As time passed, the chaplain's quarters were, whenever possible, handed over to the medical officer, whose immediate presence might prove of the highest importance.

No branch of the prison management was more thoroughly reformed and renovated by the Prison Commissioners than the medical. A great impulse was given to the work by the appointment, as the first Medical Inspector, of Dr. R. M. Gover, who devoted himself zealously and unceasingly to raising the sanitary and hygienic conditions to the highest point, and watching constantly over the proper treatment of the sick. His high sense of duty, his scientific attainments, and his untiring activity, made a great mark. He was strongly supported by Sir Edmund Du Cane, who never stinted funds for this service, in spite of his severely economic mind, and the result may be seen in the many fine hospital buildings in our prisons of to-day, some of them, indeed, more imposing and elaborate than the occasion seems to require. Colonel McHardy, R.E., the executive officer, was a man of large ideas, and he had a free hand. The hospitals at Newcastle and Durham (built, I think, by Colonel Beamish, R.E., his successor) are monuments that will long remain to attest the desire to



improve in the matter of hospitals. I may add that every prison was presently provided with an "infectious ward," quite isolated and apart, where suspicious but undeveloped cases were treated, and to this the immunity of prisons from epidemics, even when prevalent in the neighbourhood, has been, no doubt, largely due. It is a curious fact that that mysterious affliction, influenza, long spared the prison population, although warders and officers residing outside suffered considerably.

Cleanliness is a primary article of faith in prison management. The facilities for bathing were greatly increased, so that every individual might bathe once a week, while underwear is changed twice a week. I have read bitter complaints, sharp criticisms by those who have endured imprisonment, that prison clothing, including sheets and blankets, was never sufficiently washed, but I cannot admit it so far as my experience goes. The prison laundries turned out very good work, and, in large towns, where hotels and private persons were supplied, they made considerable profits, and it was a general boast that the linen was "beautifully got up." Where trade took precedence, the home washing might come off second best, but great care was always exercised in giving clean things—a manifestly necessary precaution where garments were interchangeable after they had passed through the wash-house. Every prisoner, however brief his stay, had the privilege of sending his private clothing to be washed against his release, so that a sentence of three days, if it began on Saturday, became quite a pleasant "week end" trip, two days' board and lodging, with a bath and wash up against Monday morning.

One of the earliest of the duties imposed upon the Inspectors was to inspect and report upon every individual of the prison staff. It was essential that the Commissioners should form a correct estimate of their character and value before taking them into Government employment, and should weed out the unfit or disqualified. Some of my colleagues interpreted this a little too strictly, forgetting that it would be difficult to remove any but the most flagrantly incom-

petent, except by discharge and pension. To prove a case against even the least efficient was not easy; all could stand on the terms of the Act, that no one was to be damnified by its becoming law, and I saw at once that we were committed to all the men we took over, except those ripe for retirement. There was a large percentage of these, however, and their final disposal calls for a few words in protest against the hardships that may be caused by the want of elasticity in official procedure.

When the lists of officers for retirement had been duly settled and approved, the amounts of pension to be paid came up for discussion. Each local authority had its own rules; some had promised terms more or less liberal to their servants, the highest being at the rate of two-thirds salary after twenty years' service. When the grants were put forward H.M. Treasury distinctly declined to give assent. The amounts fixed for pensions by the State were considerably less, and the whole of the prison officials were now public servants. A long argument followed, which ended in the Treasury tying itself to the minimum grant, but giving permission to the local authority to increase it according to their rules. Now a second difficulty cropped up. A small portion, the last few months, of service was rendered by the outgoing officials to the State, and could only be recognised for pension at the public rate, an illiberal, but, of course, indisputable argument. On top of this came the nice point as to how this sum should be paid. By the Paymaster General, representing the Treasury, direct to each individual, or should the local authority issue it, receiving a lump sum in advance as an indemnity? It took months and months to arrive at this sum, and the payment of both pensions was meanwhile withheld. The effect of this was that the unfortunate people, most of them old, worn-out servants, who had no other means of livelihood, starved. Any who had savings drew upon them as long as they lasted, but the bulk of them came upon the parish, awaiting the adjustment of these intricate calculations of dilatory routine.

I have spoken at length of the convict prison warders, and all that I say in praise of them I freely accord to their



comrades in the local prisons. As a body they were less smart, perhaps, more homely in manner and appearance. They were drawn largely from the same classes, having many of them early training in the Navy or Army, or having been engaged in some trade or handicraft. They were often strongly provincial, with the good and bad traits of their localities, bucolic in the country, factory bred in the manufacturing towns. Their speech often bewrayed them; they talked West Country, or Welsh or Yorkshire, and acquaintance with the local dialect was often a necessity.\* They were honest, sturdy souls, hard working, true to their salt, doing their duty to the best of their ability, as loyal to the new masters as they had been to the old. They gave little or no trouble, although our ways were not quite theirs; they accepted cheerfully and loyally the changes introduced, although many must have been irksome and upsetting to those who had got into a settled groove, and had to unlearn much before they were broken in to the new order of things. It might be said in their disfavour that they did not keep so tight a hand upon their charges as did the convict warders; but then they could afford to be milder mannered, as they dealt with the lesser offenders than did those who had the handling of the top sawyers in crime.

I liked them all as a class; for some I had a strong personal regard, and I remember them as excellent specimens of the subordinate public official. I seldom had serious fault to find. Grave neglect of duty was uncommon; errors in judgment, stupidity, sleepy-headedness, were failings to be looked for in men often illiterate, and engaged in a daily routine that did not call for the highest order of intelligence, and certainly not paid for at such a rate as to entitle us to demand it.

\* I had often great difficulty in understanding what was said to me. Here is a story from Wakefield. A prisoner complained to me one day of the severity of his sentence—twelve or eighteen months—and I was inclined to agree with him when he told me it was given to him for “insulting a policeman.” “What did you say to him?” I asked. “I said nowt; I knocked him down wi’ a bit o’ iron.” Had I talked “Yorkshire” I should have known that “to insult” is synonymous with “to assault” in that downright county.



## CHAPTER XX.

## PRISON ADMINISTRATION.

Opposition to the New System—Sir Edmund Du Cane Takes the Law into His Own Hands—Soldiers as Prison Governors—Sir William Harcourt's Preference for Civilians—Prison Chaplains—Prison Doctors—Malingerers and their Tricks—Suicide in Prisons—The Work of Prison Inspection—Literary Work in Prisons.

THE transfer of control, the inauguration of a new system, depended for success on the support of the men in actual charge, the superior officers, as they are called, the governors, chaplains, and surgeons of the prisons. They were not, as a rule, favourable to the change. Appointed by the outgoing authority, they still rendered it allegiance, and looked with doubt and apprehension upon their incoming masters, who promised to work things differently, and with a stiffer, more despotic rule. The magistrates were friends and near neighbours, easier of approach, more willing to seek and take advice, less strict, less difficult to please than the Government officials, representing, as it was often thought, red tape and routine discipline. Some of them were restive; almost from the outset there were symptoms of opposition that might deepen into insubordination; they sided with their former rulers when conflict threatened between them and the intrusive authority. Not strangely, in many parts of the country the magistrates viewed the new Prison Commission with dislike and disfavour. It had come in to usurp their place, and deprive them of their power. Hitherto the prison had been something like a pocket borough to them, their private property almost; they held the patronage of appointments, and managed it according to their lights, rendering account to no one, quite independent,

save for the vague and little used checks exercised by the Home Office through the old Inspectors.\*

A good deal of friction arose in the early days of the new management, and much fault was found with the measures and methods adopted. There were many who would have been glad to hasten the failure so confidently predicted for the new system, and so triumphantly belied in the result. The opposition culminated in the formation of a society of self-constituted critics, who met regularly, and passed votes of censure on our proceedings. The discontent was keenest in one particular prison, and was, no doubt, fostered by the Governor, who, for some reason or other, was inimical to the new order of things. He was in constant antagonism to us, opposing, evading, ridiculing the rules and regulations, and trying hard to bring the Commissioners into discredit. One unpleasant episode may be recalled in proof of this. It was a petty affair after all, but much capital was made out of it, and I quote it to show the animus against us that existed in some minds.

Sir Edmund Du Cane, in the course of one of his first official surveys of the prisons, found the gates closed against him at one—which I need not mention by name. The gatekeeper, when summoned to admit him, refused, even after he was told who it was that claimed to enter, and replied curtly, if not rudely, that the applicant must wait until reference was made to the Governor, and his permission obtained. Sir Edmund, never slow to wrath, was not the man to be thus flouted impudently, as he believed, at the door of an establishment under his supreme authority, and he took the law, with the gatekeeper, into his own hands. It was afterwards averred by his enemies that a

\* The ownership, if it may be so called, claimed in the gaols by the visiting justices was well illustrated by an incident I can vouch for as authentic. A local magnate, with a house party he found it difficult to amuse, was in the habit of sending his guests over to his gaol with a note to the Governor to show them all there was to be seen. It should be added that Mr. Cross, when the Act of 1877 came into force, set his face against the too easy visitation of prisons, and a very strict rule was made, limiting permission to enter to those clearly entitled as interested in prison matters. The rule had another aspect, and was often construed by hostile critics into a wish to conceal.



more or less savage assault was committed upon the warder, and when the matter came before the House the Home Secretary could not deny that an assault had been committed. The general verdict was that the offence condoned its correction, and that this was a just view was the better shown when it came out that the whole thing was a trap, laid by the Governor, who expected the visit, and wished to humiliate his chief. It was proved also that the gatekeeper knew Sir Edmund perfectly well by sight.

The power for good or evil of the Governors was undoubtedly great, and, on the whole, it was well used. There were many excellent men among them; they embraced many types, and were very various in character, quality, and antecedents. A great many had been military officers; the governorship of a gaol having always been deemed a prize on retirement from the service, while the magistrates very often, when choosing their men, gave a preference to one who had been trained in the school of discipline, and had acquired the power of command, with the no less useful and essential habit of obedience to superior authority. So the old soldiers predominated as the heads of prisons, and, as I have said above, they were of many different categories. There was the county man, brought in by a strong demonstration of friends, who fought among themselves as to which local family should have a turn, but who combined like one man to resist the election of an outsider. There was the officer of some distinction, whose medals and war services appealed irresistibly to magistrates and voters who had themselves borne the King's commission. I remember a curious instance of the respect shown to the uniform, and the credit it gave to the man who wore it. A cavalry regiment was on the march through a country district, when it reached the county town, and it became known that the magistrates were assembled in session for the purpose of appointing a Governor to the local gaol. The adjutant of the regiment, who had ridden in the Balaclava charge, and was in every way a gallant soldier, but was now anxious to settle in life, rode up to the County Hall, dismounted from his charger, and proceeded to offer himself

as a candidate for the vacant post. His appearance, his history, as told in the Army List lying on the table, and the position he held were his best credentials, and he was unanimously elected then and there. I knew him well—a high-spirited, painstaking, even-tempered, and entirely trustworthy colleague and friend.

Another man of the same stamp, an old soldier who had risen from the ranks, had such a distinguished record that he won all suffrages, provided the necessary personal interview proved satisfactory. It was impossible for the candidate to attend at the meeting of the Watch Committee, and he sent his photograph. It must have been a sufficient warranty, for he secured the post, and, as he was long under my orders, I can testify that he fully justified the choice made of him. A third old soldier was passed from the constabulary into the post of Governor; a hale old veteran, still straight as a sapling, and as active as when he rode with his troop of Horse Artillery at the Duke of Wellington's funeral, and gained a commission in McMurdo's Land Transport Corps in the Crimea. The selection of another officer was not equally happy. I might mention a certain Captain, who had once a good record, but who fell away from his high estate, and "did time" in his own gaol for embezzlement of county funds. Some years afterwards I met him at a friend's dinner table, little knowing what had happened, and it was not till I heard the story afterwards that I understood why my fellow guest seemed so uncomfortable and ill at ease in my company.

No cases of fraud and misappropriation by superior officers ever came under my personal observation. I had to do with two or three in the lower grade of storekeeper and financial officer. In one of these, I made the discovery myself when "taking the cash," as it was called, or balancing the books to date. There had been some unaccountable delay in producing the banker's pass book, and when it appeared I found that there were several erasures, figures scratched out with a pen-knife, and others substituted in ink, which had run. I was not satisfied with the



explanation given by the storekeeper, and sent the book by a sure hand under seal to the bankers for verification. When it came back I at once sent for the storekeeper, but he was gone! He had walked straight out of the prison to the railway, and was next heard of in Australia. In another case a storekeeper who had been engaged in betting transactions suddenly disappeared, and it was found that he was guilty of serious defalcations. He was supposed to have wandered about the town all night, beside himself with grief and remorse, and in the morning dropped down in an empty shed and died.

Although there was a strong predilection for military Governors, it was not shared by all authorities in bestowing patronage. Some held that previous prison training was essential, and sought their men among the Deputy-Governors and clerks, who had served an apprenticeship to the business, having all its technicalities, legal, disciplinary, and industrial, at their fingers' ends. There were excellent specimens of this class to be found in the various prisons, some of whom have since risen to the highest positions. Their loyalty to the Commissioners was above proof, and to me they were, for the most part, very valuable coadjutors, ever willing to counsel and advise out of their ripe experience. This class has been perpetuated by the practice introduced in recent years, as I have said, of promoting deserving seniors on the clerical and disciplinary establishments to fifth-class Governorships—a strong incentive to good service, and amply justified by the men it has brought to the front.

The preference for naval or military officers did not always extend to the supreme rulers of the Prison Department. Sir William Harcourt, when Home Secretary, made no secret of his dislike to the soldier and sailor class, and he never approved of the appointment of men who had served in the Army or afloat as Deputy-Governors. A regular system had been introduced by the Commissioners of keeping a list of such candidates, pensioned or retired officers, who were found peculiarly eligible, by experience and acquired qualifications, for the Department. They had

some claims to consideration on account of past services, and possessed the obvious advantage of being worth more than they were actually paid as Deputy-Governors; in other words, they were in receipt of military pension as well as civil pay. The latter was on a very mediocre scale, and unlikely to attract the highest class of applicant. Indeed, as a matter of fact, very few appointments were made during Sir William Harcourt's *régime* of the class he did not favour. His view was not maintained by his successors in office, although I believe the practice to-day is to accept civilians who have had some previous police or legal training.

Of the prison chaplains as a whole, and of every creed, I may speak, not without presumption, perhaps, as earnest, well meaning, unsparing of effort, and imbued with a high sense of the obligations imposed upon them. Some, of course, were more zealous and active than others, some more eloquent, but one and all were in close touch with their charges, and anxious to do their best by them. It was in their power to help them in a material sense, as well as by ghostly counsel, for the chaplain is, as a rule, the chief agent of the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, and can apply its funds to the assistance and support of the weak-kneed who desire to do well on release, but cannot always find immediate employment, and so speedily relapse into evil ways.

The chaplains of many of the local prisons have to face one awful duty that must weigh heavily upon the sensitive spirit. It is their sad and trying mission to prepare the condemned criminal for his impending doom, and I have been told by them that they suffer most acutely in the discharge of this sacred function. It is not so much in the preparation for death of those who view its approach in a resigned spirit, but in the terrible conflict with the hardened and impenitent soul, who will resist almost, though seldom quite, to the last, his solemn ministrations. So deeply does the priest appreciate the duty of attending the condemned, that in one of the prisons I used to visit it was generally undertaken by the Bishop of the diocese himself.

The prison surgeons or doctors were for the most part



a credit to the medical profession. Only in the larger prisons did they give all their time to their anxious and arduous duties. Elsewhere they were selected from the general practitioners in the neighbourhood, paid regular visits, and were always within call. Some of them were quite eminent men, highly esteemed in their localities and beyond, often called in for consultation or to perform operations at a distance from home; and, indeed, the post of prison surgeon conferred a distinctly high status upon its holder. Their responsibility was always great, although I think it sat lightly upon them at times, but the results were satisfactory, so far as appeared from the medical record of the prisons. The general health was excellent; "such a term as 'gaol fever' might be expunged from the English vocabulary," wrote Dr. Gover, in 1879. Speaking in 1877, the same high authority records that in that year "there were only fourteen cases of typhoid and enteric fever, and of these, five occurred in one prison in an infected district." There was only one case of smallpox in the whole year (1879) throughout the prisons of England and Wales, and not a single instance of scarlet fever.

Again, the annual death roll was low, only a little over eight per 1,000 of the daily average population, although the admissions into hospitals were numerous for such complaints as phthisis, acute rheumatism, bronchitis, all incident to the wretched life led by so many who find their way into prison. A large contingent was supplied by the weak minded, for it was much the custom of the local benches to commit doubtful cases of disordered intellect for report by the prison surgeon, always a difficult and irksome task. To decide between the real sufferer and the impostor was a great trouble, and many hundreds were admitted to the infirmaries during the year, supposed to be afflicted with anomalous or feigned diseases. Dr. Gover wisely laid it down that it was better to run the risk of admitting an impostor than of refusing treatment in the case of genuine illness. Malingering has, perhaps, been carried further by the inmates of prisons than by any class of people. I will digress here to mention a few cases of fraud long persisted

in, which have come under my notice, or of which I have been informed.

The methods most frequently employed are to feign paralysis, to bring on hæmorrhage, to produce or aggravate sores, and to tamper with the eyes. One case of the first category is that of a convict at Dartmoor. After a trifling fall, as it seemed, he was taken to hospital, complaining of severe pains in his back, and apparently suffering from paralysis of the lower half of the body. He pretended to have lost all power of movement, could not turn in bed without help, and was carried out when taken to the exercising yard. He kept up this imposture for three years without intermission, and, throughout, his malady resisted all treatment, though he was just able to hobble about on crutches. One day, without the slightest warning, he threw them away, and made a present of them to his warder, crying out that he had done with them.

A very similar case is also reported from Dartmoor. A convict, who had long and stoutly maintained that he was utterly incapable of doing any work, was at length recommended for "release on medical grounds," because his health was so impaired he could not walk a yard. When discharged he was sent to his home in Manchester, accompanied by an officer, and furnished with a wheeled chair, which he could move with his arms. On arrival this chair was missing, and his warder escort conveyed him in a cab from the station to his home, a public-house in the suburbs, where he left the invalid with his friends. Next day the warder went to the station to inquire for the chair, and the first person he met was the invalid, walking about briskly, swinging a stick, and his hat cocked jauntily on one side of his head. "You've made a quick recovery!" he was told. "There was never anything the matter with me. I can walk as well as you can—but anyhow, I'll have the chair," and it was taken possession of, and wheeled away by a friend he had brought with him.

A most ingenious deception was practised, also at Dartmoor, by a convict supposed to have the bones of his foot diseased, but it was found, after long and careful examina-



tion, that there were two large needles, bound round with thread, embedded in an old wound above the instep, and when these had been removed he recovered. But he was not yet beaten. He tried many other tricks and devices. One was to run the sharpened end of a piece of copper wire into his knee, and the ulceration set up was so serious that he all but lost his leg. Then he manufactured a number of sores around his knee joint, and by thrusting bits of rag and thread into the wounds, produced a frightful amount of swelling and inflammation. Once he was found with a bandage tightly bound round his waist, which was followed by extensive swelling and rigidity in one leg. To remedy this the limb was enveloped in gutta percha, but he managed to convert a strip of sheeting and a skewer (sent to him with his dinner) into a tourniquet, which compressed the leg at night, and undid the good of the treatment during the day. At last the surgeon conquered him by ordering the limb to be continually exposed, outside the bed, in full view of every one, so that tampering with it was impossible.

Two cases were reported from Parkhurst in 1891. In one, filtration of air (emphysema) was found beneath the skin, and caused much perplexity, until an ordinary safety pin, straightened out, was found in the patient's bed, and it was discovered that he had punctured the lung with it. After this man's death, for he succumbed, another safety pin was found embedded in the lung tissue. The other case was a well simulated case of Bright's disease, undoubtedly produced artificially.

The employment of foreign substances has been commonly practised; lime scraped from the cell wall or the surface of an old brick has been used to aggravate sores or produce inflammation of the eyes. A case is reported where a prisoner inserted a small pellet of oakum, or, possibly, of paper chewed and worked up, into the lower lid of his eye. It was stated in evidence by Dr. Guy, before a Royal Commission, that he knew a prisoner who had sewn up his mouth and eyelids with a needle and thread, in order to convince the authorities that he was insane. A prisoner who has made up his mind to "do the barmy" will go a long

way to support his pretension, so much so as to prove the very converse, and show that his determined attempts are the result of a sound, sane understanding. I should have mentioned the case of "Poo, C——!" when dealing with my Chatham days. C—— was a convict who, for weeks together, kept up the sing-song cry of "Poo, C——!" without intermission day or night. Ordinary punishment had not the slightest effect upon him, neither close confinement on bread and water, nor long doses of penal diet; still he defied discipline, and disturbed the quiet of the prison. The doctors would altogether refuse to admit that he was weak minded, and had no hesitation in declaring him fit for corporal punishment. Three dozen lashes were accordingly awarded him by a Director, and completely cured him.

An impression prevails that suicide is common among prisoners, that many would rather take their own lives than face the miseries of prolonged confinement. The idea is not borne out by the facts. From calculations made by Dr. Gover in 1879, it appeared that in the five years preceding there had been only ten cases in the average population of 10,000 in the convict prisons. In the local prisons, however, where the total was 20,000, there had been 81. The comparison shows that the desire is strongest at the outset of a man's sentence, when the future is darkest, and much gloom and depression weighs on the mind. Hope returns when a man gets into the free air and the sunshine, into the associated, wholesome labour of the public works prisons. Even there the mind still broods over the past, and there are well authenticated cases of determined suicides, caused by remorse for some atrocious crime. The act is stimulated by some small grievance, some privilege refused has soured the temper, and made life seem intolerable. Mr. George Clifton, a famous old prison official, long Governor of Portland, told Lord Kimberley's Commission in 1878 the story of a wife murderer, whose death sentence had been commuted to penal servitude for life, a very violent, fierce creature, who took his own life because he was displeased with the library book issued to him.

Another case is given by Captain Vernon Harris, my



whilom colleague, a firm, but equable, and strictly impartial Governor, a tried and experienced official, whose long and useful services to the Prison Department have only just been terminated. In his small but most interesting monograph on Dartmoor he tells us of a convict who, having passed through every stage of irreconcilable misconduct, grew tired of resistance, and ended his own life. He had constantly "broken out," destroyed books, bedding, windows, clothes; had refused food, until medical interference became necessary, then was obstinately mute, and last of all feigned insanity. "At last he seemed to surrender, and assured the doctor that he would offend no more, yet that very night, with a light burning in his cell, for he was 'under strict observation,' and frequently visited by the officer patrols, he committed suicide. He strangled himself by tying a bandage tightly round his neck and affixing one end to his sheet, and forming a loop at the other end, into which he inserted his foot, and elongating it, effected strangulation. This act was unexampled for cunning and determination. Covered by his bed clothes, and refraining from any noise, he appeared to the officer on night duty, who passed and repassed in the night in full view of him, to be sleeping naturally."

The most minute and careful precautions are taken to minimise the facilities for *felo de se*. No hooks or nails are left upon the cell walls, no protuberances from which a noose might depend, but the deed is done, nevertheless. I call to mind a case in Newgate, when a man hanged himself under his iron bedstead, by tying his towel round his neck and making one end of it fast to a cross bar. Then he lay himself down full length below, and was soon asphyxiated. The success which attended his effort was turned into a grim joke, I remember. About that time there had been a shocking failure of an execution at Exeter, that of a manservant who had murdered his mistress, when the scaffold machinery was defective, and the drop would not work, so that the capital sentence could not be carried out. Comparing this with the ease with which the much more difficult suicide had been accomplished, the words of the Duke of Wellington

were quoted : "If you want to do a thing well you must do it yourself."

The rôle of the Government Inspector of almost every category is to be perpetually on the move. Mine was especially a peripatetic billet, for I was expected to travel between London and Northumberland at least once a month for my regular visitations, while matters were continually cropping up otherwise to require my presence in my district. It was, indeed, held by some hypercritical people that it would be more convenient if we Inspectors were to reside in the prisons entrusted to our charge, but the suggestion never found favour with Sir Edmund Du Cane, who thought, as I believe, wisely, that we should lose touch with the central department, and, with it, that uniformity in practice which it was our main object to establish. We were intended to be the "eyes" and "ears" of the Board, to spy out everything, and bring all errors and shortcomings to the notice of our superiors; to listen to all complaints, to remedy them if immediate correction was necessary, if not, to pass them on to superior authority. I sometimes felt that the Commissioners did their observation a little too vicariously. Much friction might have been avoided, and certainly much correspondence saved, if they had looked into things for themselves a little more. Matters would have been more readily settled on the spot by those who wielded the power. As it was, we inquired, reported, and the decision went by post, often tardily, and after the papers had been pitchforked backwards and forwards "for explanation," "further inquiry," and so forth. The division of labour was not the best for administrative working, and it would often have simplified and expedited business if the Commissioners had given up office routine and taken more practical control of their prisons. Later, by the direct injunction of Sir William Harcourt, they were desired to visit them periodically.

It was once asked how many years of his life "Joe" Jefferson, the great American actor, spent as Rip Van Winkle, his favourite part. I have never exactly calculated the number of hours I have spent in a railway carriage, but roughly I may put it at 20,000. To many, it was an irk-



some and nearly interminable bore, to be met (literally) by "Patience," in the various forms of that absorbing game, "the Demon," "Miss Milligan," and the rest, and one of my colleagues confessed that he killed time, watch in hand, noting the speed at which we sped past the telegraph posts. Happily, I liked railway travelling not a little, because I found my brain more active in a fast express, and I could produce literary work more easily—better work I will not say—in a railway carriage than anywhere else, if I had it to myself, and that could generally be managed by one who came to be so well known on the line. The mechanical effort is not the same, however, on all lines. I could write on the Great Northern, after a little practice, with facility; on others I will not particularise, from imperfections in the rolling stock, or badness of the permanent way, it was exceedingly difficult, almost impossible to write. The process I adopted, and I may mention it here for those who write or wish to write in trains, was that of holding in the hand lightly, so as to give with the swaying motion of the train, a square block pad of sufficient size. I never found any of the contrivances patented to make writing easy of the slightest use, and I succeeded so well with my own simple method that I have sent many thousands of lines direct to the printers from the station pillar-box. One especial advantage of the literary work thus undertaken was that it occupied the mind so fully that the most tedious journey passed quickly. I have been warned by fellow passengers that I was running great risks to health in doing this, that my eyes would suffer, my hair go, that I might look for hemiplegia and spinal complaints, but I continued the practice for twenty odd years without any evil effects beyond the gradual need for glasses, inevitable, no doubt, as my years increased.

There was a certain monotony in these almost interminably repeated rounds, and some little hardship. The worst trials were the vicissitudes of weather, the alternation between summer heats and the often intense cold. I have good reason to remember one journey in particular, that memorable 18th January, 1881, when London was devast-

ated by the most terrible blizzard of modern times. It was my wedding morning, and as I had arranged to complete some inspections before going to Paris for the honeymoon, we drove through the snowstorm, my wife and I, to King's Cross to take the train for Leeds. The spectacle presented by my coachman on arriving was truly piteous. He was plastered all over with mud and *débris*, and more than once I thought the brougham would have been overturned *en route*.

During the last fifteen or twenty years I travelled very generally by the same roads, until I knew them by heart, as I did my Bradshaw's time tables and the hotels in the principal towns. The landscape was familiar to me all along the lines; I could tell all the landmarks, and knew to a few minutes when I was due to arrive at any particular place. Railway performance does not, of course, keep pace always with promise, and I have spent many a weary hour when trains ran late or crooked, in carriage or on platform, according to the weather, when I ought to have been at my journey's end. As a rule the main expresses were exact to the minute, but on the bye roads, the slow trains left much to be desired. Happily, I had to complain of nothing worse than occasional unpunctualities, and I think it says something for the safety and security of our train service, that in twenty years of incessant journeying I never met with accident or mishap. The nearest I have been to any catastrophe was when a train from New Holland to Lincoln ran over a man, and I saw his severed head brought past my window. Once, too, I travelled with a little lad, who sat wide-eyed and sleepless, and started at every shake of the train. He was one of the survivors of the terrible Abbots Ripton disaster. Nothing amiss ever happened to me; I never got a scratch or a cross word; although I was seriously advised to carry a revolver on my long journeys, I had no reason to regret that I never took such a precaution.

Towards the close of my service, a change in the method of inspection greatly extended my routes, which covered now the whole Kingdom. The districts were interchangeable, and we Inspectors visited them in turn, taking in also the



convict prisons. I could claim considerable topographical knowledge, and a pretty intimate acquaintance with the whole railway system of England. I still took my old line through Hertfordshire, across the beautiful valley of Ardsley, into the level plains of the Fen country, and so to Peterborough, the first point on what I called my cathedral route. For, branching off at Retford, I could reach Lincoln, and from that pass through Hull to Beverley, with its Minster, and so to York, far famed for its Minster, and on to Durham, the ancient see of the prince bishops, the soldier prelates, whose palace was a fortified stronghold, over-awing the whole northern country, and whose noble church has a rugged grandeur all its own. At Newcastle was a fine architectural monument; and, after traversing the whole length of the Border, I found myself gazing at the red sandstone cathedral of Carlisle. By this last route I retraced the Tyne almost to its source, from the blackened and imposing waterway that flows under the High Level Bridge, where Stephenson's "Puffing Billy" still stands as the first conception in iron, back through a smiling landscape, to where it is an innocent, new-born trout stream.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## UP AND DOWN THE PRISONS.

North, East, West, and South—Egyptian Prisons—Prisoners' Complaints at Home—Diet a Burning Question—Should Prison Treatment be Differentiated?—H—'s Two Escapes from Prison—The Man who Escaped through the Ventilator—Other Cases of Prison-breaking—An Unlucky Tumble—An Escaped Prisoner who was Never Recaptured.

I LOVED the journey south from Carlisle through the Lake district. By scaur and fell, skirting the wild mountain streams, across long stretches of lonely moorland down to the lower levels of the pastoral country, and on to lose all light and fresh air in the black, smoky manufacturing cities, the more forbidding from the contrast. The long run to the west was a joy through all its length: along the valley of the Thames to Bath, and so to South Wales, under the Severn, to come out at Newport and Cardiff, and travel on to grimy and untidy Swansea, and the fringe of the coal-producing district, into Carmarthenshire, well repaid when I struck northward from that point diagonally across the whole breadth of the Principality, to reach Craven Arms, and make for Chester. North Wales had its attractions; to thread the course of the Vale of Clwydd to Ruthin, or to follow the fine coast line, passing by Conway, Llanfairfechan, to skirt the Menai Straits, and halt presently at Carnarvon, my last prison on that side.

There was yet greater charm in the south-western route, passing from Bristol to Taunton and Templecombe, to Exeter and Plymouth and beyond, bound for my journey's end at Dartmoor, a far off bourne on the bleak uplands, too often obscured by rain clouds, a wild, wind-swept, boulder-strewn landscape of craggy tors and fantastic peaks, chilled to the bone as we rose higher and higher into the icy cold, rarefied, but invigorating atmosphere. Returning home-



ward, I diverged to Weymouth for Portland, another prison scene of unique interest, gained by a weary climb through the stone-built village, lying deep under plentiful white dust, as fine as snowdrift. A visit to these two far-off convict colonies possessed a never-failing charm, for I was transported, too, into another world, peopled by strange beings in strange garb, a great horde of patiently industrious labourers, submissive under stern discipline backed by the ready breechloader. Nothing in all my rounds could compare with those two long drives, the one from Tavistock, "fourteen miles up to Dartmoor and six miles down" as the coachmen call it, the other from Weymouth by Upton and Wyke Regis and past the Chesil beach on to the great wastes of stone and the prolific quarries on Portland Bill.

Only second in interest to these was the trip from Cowes inland to the pretty gardens of low-lying Parkhurst, in the heart of the Isle of Wight, and the climb from Rochester to the fortified heights of Borstal above the Medway. At all of these the system of public works, introduced when deportation ceased, has enriched the country with many monuments in proof of its wisdom and usefulness. At Dartmoor wide areas of waste land have been reclaimed, and the soil has been profitably cultivated for the first time since prehistoric ages. The work has been progressing steadily, and good arable land is being manufactured by felon hands and added to the "farm" at the rate of five-and-twenty acres per annum, land that produces ample crops, and on which are reared prize-winning ponies, well-grown cattle, and excellent sheep.

From Portland quarries, again, many millions of tons of stones have been excavated, sufficient to build the mile long breakwater, and supply dressed stone for the prisons and public buildings erected elsewhere. The defence of Chatham dockyard and arsenal has been more or less assured by the forts on Blue Bell Hill, the work of the convicts from Borstal, where the new and daring principle was adopted of sending them by train to considerable distances from home—three or four miles or more—to the scene of action. The railway was on the narrowest gauge, and had

been formerly laid upon the Red Sea littoral during the Abyssinian War; the carriages employed were open, as it seemed, although roofed in, but the security of the felon travellers was assured by running a gang chain the whole length of the train, and armed warders were on duty at each end.

This method of utilising labour at some distance from the walls has been practised in the Egyptian prisons since they came under British control. When on the Nile a few years back, I made it my business to inspect the arrangements in force, being moved by the *esprit de métier* to visit the prisons abroad whenever the chance came my way. I have spoken already of my past experience at the Spanish *presidio* of Ceuta. Much later I made a long study of the French prison system, and visited all the prisons of Paris. I did the same in Belgium, examining the elaborate processes then in force for inflicting prolonged solitary confinement as a means of punitive deterrence and permanent reformation. I shall still have a word or two to say later on as to the methods and aims of our neighbours in their penal system, but—if I may indulge in a digression—will deal here with the Egyptian prisons as I saw them in '95-'98.

Down to 1884 the Egyptian prisons were a disgrace to humanity and civilisation. Before that date the country was covered with *zaptiehs*, or small district prisons, in which illegal imprisonment and every form of cruelty were constantly practised. It is quite easy for anyone in authority to consign a poor devil to custody and keep him there *sine die*. A good prison system could only be introduced in improved prisons, and the first created was the great convict establishment of Tourah, a village about eight miles above Cairo, on the banks of the Nile, and at the foot of the great limestone quarries that have supplied the country with its building material from the earliest days. In 1885 the old military hospital at Tourah was handed over to be converted into a public works prison; a few of the wards were converted into cells and a draft of 250 convicts was brought to occupy them, from the arsenal at Alexandria. They proved skilful workmen, as the *fellaheen*, whether captive or free,



invariably are, and with the help of a few skilled stone masons, they restored the half-ruined upper part, and converted it into a satisfactory prison for 150 more. The whole 400 continued their labours, and to such good purpose, demolishing, removing, cleaning, constructing new roads and approaches, that in May, 1886, an entirely new prison for 500 convicts was completed and occupied. The plan pursued was very much that which I have already described in the building of Wormwood Scrubs.\*

A visit to Tourah (and I made several) is both interesting and instructive, showing how much can be done by an energetic and resourceful administration with very imperfect means. The prison is as far as possible self contained and self supporting. It grows its own vegetables, especially the Egyptian lentils that form the staple of the diet, and its gardens are irrigated by water raised from the Nile by the *shadoof*, a familiar enough object on the banks of the river, that primitive water wheel, the same now as in the days of Joseph and the patriarchs. It is punishment to work the *shadoof*, extra labour, yet this forms the daily task of the free Arab cultivator. But the chief employment of the Tourah convicts is in the quarries, a couple of miles from the prison, to which the gangs proceed every morning at daylight, and where they remain every day in the week but Friday, their Sabbath, till four in the afternoon. There is no time wasted in marching to and fro. The dinner, or midday meal, is carried out to the quarries by the cooks, and after it is eaten the convicts are allowed an hour's rest in such shade as can be found in the fairly blazing heat of the dazzlingly white quarries. As this midday resort is the common hour for trains passing to the neighbouring health resort of Helouan, casual observers might think that rest and refreshment form the great part of the Egyptian convict's daily life. But this is a grievous mistake, as I can testify after visiting the quarries in the hours of labour.

At Tourah liberty seems within easy reach. Not a mile from the quarries are great overhanging cliffs, honeycombed

\* See *ante*, p. 228 *et seq.*

with caves, deep cavernous recesses affording secure hiding places, and it was for these that a rush was made in August, 1896. It was a very serious attempt indeed, and success was achieved by some of the runaways. The hour chosen was that of the break off from labour, when the gangs, brought together and surrounded by their guards, converge on a central point, very much as may be seen at any works prison like Portland or Dartmoor, and thence march home in one compact formation to the distant prison. This was the moment chosen for the general stampede. About sixty or seventy agreed to rise, and run steadily off towards the shelter of the hills. A few were told off to try conclusions with the armed guards, to wrest from them their rifles, and thus secure both immunity from fire and the power to use the weapons in self defence. The prisoners had it their own way at first. Some of the rifles were seized by the fugitives, who turned on their pursuers, and made some pretty practice, during which a few of the more fortunate got away.

But now authority asserted itself. Many were shot down, and those overtaken incontinently surrendered. The absence of "grit," so characteristic of the *fellaheen*, asserted itself at once, and those poor wretches who had been brave enough to make the first rush under a hail of bullets, now squatted on their hams, and with uplifted hands implored mercy, or declared that it was all a mistake.

"*Malesh!* It is an error," was their cry then, but there was no doubt of it when a few days later Nemesis overtook them in the shape of corporal punishment, for the lash, a cat of six tails, is used in Egyptian prisons as a last resort in the maintenance of discipline and good order. It is only inflicted, however, under proper safeguards, and by direct sentence of a high official. There is no "*kourbash*" in the prisons; no warder or guard is suffered to raise his hand against a prisoner. Tyranny and ill-usage are peremptorily checked and forbidden.

Egyptian convicts do much good work, sometimes of a superior kind. Now and again a skilled handicraftsman is met with who is willing to put forward his best efforts, and there is always a smart man or two who will act as warder or



foreman to the rest, very much as is found with convicts all over the world. I came across one man in particular, well known as a most industrious and intelligent worker, who, naturally, took the foremost place, and controlled and directed the efforts of his fellows. He so gained the goodwill of our officials, that, not knowing his antecedents, many of them strongly recommended him for release as a reward for his usefulness. But the prison authorities were unable to accede to this seemingly justifiable request. This best of prisoners (again following experience elsewhere) was the worst of criminals. He had committed no fewer than eight murders not, I presume, with proved malice aforethought, or he would hardly have escaped the gallows. The death penalty is not, however, inflicted very frequently in Egypt. In one case, worth mentioning as illustrating the almost comical side of Egyptian justice, a man sentenced to death was held to serve a short term of imprisonment for some minor offence before he was considered ripe for execution. The short sentence passed, he was hanged.

Tobacco is not forbidden in the prisons in Egypt. It is issued to convicts in the works prisons in small rations as a reward, according to the Governor's judgment. The unconvicted and civil prisoners undergoing mere detention are at liberty to purchase it. I was a witness, the cause indeed, of a curious and unwonted scene in the small prison at Assiout, when I visited it in 1896. The sale of tobacco was in progress in the prison yard, where the whole body of prisoners, a hundred or more, were at exercise. An official stood behind a small table on which were the little screws of tobacco for disposal, each for a few "milliems," the smallest Egyptian coin, a fractional part of a farthing. The eagerness with which the poor prisoners eyed the weed excited my compassion, and I bought up the whole table load, then and there, for a couple of shillings. The prisoners crowding round saw the deal and understood. Hardly had I put down the ten piastres when the whole body "rushed" the table, overset it, threw the screws of tobacco on the ground, and all hands pounced upon the scattered lot in one great struggling, scrambling medley. The tobacco was quite wasted, of

course, and I have no idea who got the two shilling piece. The *mêlée* was so unmanageable that it was necessary to call out the guard to drive the prisoners back into the wards. I was aghast at my indiscretion, and when I told it to Crookshank Pacha on my return to Cairo, I humbly confessed that, as a prison official, I ought to have known better.

I always found much to interest, even amuse me, on my visits to the prisons at home. I was often called upon to make some special investigation, to sift the particulars of an escape, to inquire into some complaint, some alleged grievance, for it was incumbent upon me to see, and personally speak to, every prisoner in custody, affording immediate redress if necessary, but, as a rule, reporting to headquarters for the action of the Commissioners. As my arrival at a prison, both as to day and hour, was unexpected, and as on passing the gate I went straight into the wards, it would have been quite impossible to hoodwink or to burke any inconvenient application from a really ill-used and unjustly treated man. Moreover, my escort, for I never visited quite alone—was not within earshot when the prisoners spoke to me, so that they were pretty sure of my protection and interference in any rare case of tyranny and oppression. It may savour of self-sufficiency, but I can safely say that no real cause for complaint could exist without its coming to my notice, and that no officer, high or low, would have tried, or, if he had, would have succeeded in deceiving me or concealing any serious irregularities or abuse of power.

The complaints made to me were almost invariably of a trivial kind. They ranged for the most part over the same subjects: the loss of some small privilege or a petition for its concession before earned, such as leave to write or receive a letter or be visited because Bank Holiday was at hand, and their friends could travel by special excursion trains; many complaints were levied against the food supplied, its inferiority, or the "shortness" of the allowance. Once a cripple, who walked with crutches, complained that a crutch had been taken from him; it was proved that he had been detected in smuggling in tobacco in the handle of one, and the other had been removed temporarily for closer



search. Men would argue points of law by the hour; the interpretation of the rules, the Governor's powers, such as that of inflicting bread and water punishment, were contested. I was asked by a famous athlete who had got into trouble whether the authorities would release him a week earlier, to allow him to fill an engagement to appear at the Chicago Exhibition.

Suspicion rankles ever in the minds of the prisoners. They fancy their correspondence is tampered with, that letters "out" or "in" are detained or suppressed, although in the latter case it is the strict rule that the prisoner shall be informed, and the reasons given him, such as improper language, and references to forbidden things, with the option of withdrawing the offending passages. They cannot believe that their friends outside may be at fault, careless, or disinclined to write, or that letters have not found them, a fact proved by their return, as often happens, through the Dead Letter Office, endorsed "gone away," "refused," or "not known." Prisoners, not strangely, are extremely sensitive in the matter of food. It is never easy to satisfy them that they have got the proper weight—a sufficient allowance. An old hand has the very nicest appreciation of quantity, and will claim to judge a ration by handling it, or at the first glance. They suspect their comrades in the kitchen, where each individual ration is weighed and measured, and will accuse them of purloining and eating surreptitiously all they can abstract. No doubt the cooks make the most of their opportunities, even when under close supervision, for a post in the kitchen is greatly valued, and the men have often a greasy well fed look that cannot be quite accounted for by the smell and emanations from the victuals. At Wormwood Scrubs I never allowed the same man to work in the kitchen for more than a couple of months at a time, so as to spread the advantages over as large a number as possible; the bulk of them, therefore, benefited, and seemed well nourished. Complaints of short weight were seldom substantiated. A prisoner was always entitled to have his food weighed in his presence, and the deficiency, if any, made up, scales for the purpose being kept

at hand in the ward. They used to answer me, when I suggested that course, that if they went out to have an allowance weighed, they got themselves disliked for giving too much trouble, which might be true, but was never proved to me in any way.

Diet is always a burning question in prison administration. It agitates all persons concerned. First, and foremost, those who live on it; next, those who have to adjust it, trying for the happy medium between semi-starvation and wasteful excess; and, last of all, the reformers and well meaning philanthropists who watch over the well-being of the involuntary guests of the State. In my time I saw three separate phases of the question. In the first, when I joined at Chatham, the diet was meagre, but was gradually enlarged; in the second, when I was transferred to the local prisons, a new scale was introduced, devised mainly on the recommendation of Dr. Gover, and replacing the many scales in force under the local jurisdiction, most of them inclining to fulness, which the new scale certainly did not. This held the ground for some twenty years, but the swing of the pendulum now was towards leniency, and a strong expression of opinion called for some decided increase of diet, and a Committee of experts reported in that sense. "It was based on scientific principles, so as to represent a sufficiency, and not more than a sufficiency, of food for an average man doing an average day's work." Hostile criticism has been heard, however, and it has been contended that the prison compares favourably with the workhouse, and that vagrants and tramps find it a relief to be locked up. The Prison Commissioners do not yield to this view, and in their last Report combat the impression and deny the contention that because "a small section of the criminal community openly prefer prison to the workhouse, that therefore prison life is unduly attractive, that its conditions are not sufficiently rigorous, and that the whole edifice should be reconstructed to meet the case of a few ne'er-do-wells who have lost all sense of self respect, and to whom it is a matter of indifference whether they spend a few nights in a workhouse, a prison, or a barn."



The question of adequacy in the allowance is greatly affected in British prisons by the fact that the prisoner cannot add to it himself. Under the most recent conditions, medical officers have a wise and fairly wide discretion to increase amounts where individual needs require it, such as physical weakness, great height, or unusually large frames, but the concession is hedged about by strict rules, and narrowly watched. We have nothing akin to the canteen system of foreign countries, by which prisoners may use their private means or a portion of their prison earnings in the purchase of extra food or small appetising delicacies, such as will vary the monotony and improve the ordinary food. I have never quite understood why our prison authorities have set their faces steadfastly against this practice; the only objection offered being the trouble of keeping shop, and entering into intricate trading transactions. For a long time the privilege of the "pistolet," as it is called abroad, was withheld—the permission accorded to the untried to rent furnished rooms, and live in very modified comfort on payment of certain fees. This, however, is now the practice at all prisons, where the accused and still unconvicted can have better accommodation and pay for attendance.

Complaints against the quality of the food were more frequently made to me than against the quantity, but mostly from the better class of prisoner, to whom the contrast with the more or less choice living of the past was exceedingly distasteful. Food prepared in large quantities, more or less roughly, and served with small attention to those niceties that are almost second nature to many, cannot be very palatable. The flavour of the shin of beef soup may not tempt the fastidious palate, but it is good and wholesome, and I have known an American lady, who was most anxious to see the whole show, lunch very heartily off a basin of soup at Chatham prison. There are those who declare that prison baked bread, made of prison ground flour, is always sour, and the cause of chronic internal complaints, but I have known Governors and other high officials protest against the order which cut off the supply of prison bread from their breakfast tables. One article of consump-

tion was generally excellent; the potatoes, steamed in the vast coppers, were the best of their kind, but care had to be taken, just between the seasons, that the supplies sent in were up to contract. I have had to condemn them more than once, and to order the issue of the regulation substitutes, rice or compressed vegetables, although none of them are popular.

Much has been said in advocacy of a differentiated treatment of prisoners. It has been urged that detention falls most heavily on the delicately nurtured, that a man brought up to use a tooth brush, to sit at meat with knife and fork, before a well-appointed table with glass and napery, ought not to be obliged to feed out of a battered tin mug, to use a tin knife that bends in his hand, and a wooden spoon; that such discomforts mean little or nothing to the labouring classes. So large a field is opened up by these arguments that I do not care to discuss them. The common, and very plausible, answer given by the prison authorities is that the better bred and educated may be expected to hold aloof from crime, and must be prepared, if they do not, to face the penalty as it exists for all classes. On general grounds it may be urged that rich and poor, gentle and boor, stand alike before the law, and that, if the burthen is lightened for one, the privilege of greater ease must be extended to all others, and the whole system of secondary punishment, as at present administered, breaks down. The dilemma lies between treating the larger number better and the minority worse than their accustomed habits when at large.

In the matter of food, an Inspector must be on his guard, for he may be easily misled by men who only desire to give trouble. I have had bread shown to me as hard as a stone, although, as I was told, it was only baked the day previously. On inquiry into the complaint, I have found beyond question that the loaf had been hoarded up for days, on purpose to give colour to the complaint. Another time, the loaf produced might never have been baked at all; it was sad and soft as dough; the "sponge," I was told, had never risen, it was like putty, and yet it would be the only loaf in the whole prison that showed these conditions on the day in



question. Of course the inference was that the man had tampered with it, and was only making capital out of the supposed imperfection. I may state here that prisoners object to fresh, "soft" bread, on the ground that it contains a large percentage of moisture, which adds fictitious weight. I have known prisoners adulterate their soup and their skilly by secretly adding water, and showing it thus thin and weak in order to discredit the prison kitchen.

It fell to me to make several interesting inquiries into the manner and methods of escape from durance. Directly an escape was reported, one of us Inspectors was dispatched forthwith to inquire into the circumstances, and hand up those whose neglect or failure had made it possible. This was the direct order of the Secretary of State, for successful evasion of gaol was Sir William Harcourt's *bête noire*. He called it "stupid" that with all our means of safe keeping we should allow ourselves to be beaten and outwitted by the prisoners, against whom were all the odds. The premises could not be denied, but he forgot that, while the gaoler has a hundred claims upon his attention, the prisoner can concentrate his whole mind on the one object, that of getting out of his cage. Baron Trenck got the better of Frederick the Great, Newgate could not hold Jack Sheppard, Vincennes could not keep Latude. Some of the cases that came under my notice exhibited a cunning, patient ingenuity and a spirit of reckless daring that quite equalled any of the escapes recorded in prison annals. I propose to give some account of a few of the most remarkable.

H—— was a shoemaker by trade and a burglar by profession, who had been frequently an inmate of the Wakefield prison, and, as an industrious, handy man, had been suffered to go about a good deal in the interior, and thus became familiarised with all the "ins" and "outs" of the place. Fate at last overtook him with a long sentence of seven years' penal servitude, and while awaiting transfer to Dartmoor, the "shoe making" convict prison, he was put to work at his trade in Wakefield.

He was located in a cell at the end of a hall, the last on the first floor landing, the farthest from the centre there-

fore, and the most removed from supervision; his warder came to him rarely by day, and the night patrol would pass him only once or twice on his long rounds. The practice at Wakefield was to unlock the cell doors for chapel, and again for exercise, when all prisoners stood for a brief space in their doorways, awaiting the word of command to step out and file along the landing towards the central stairs, and there descend. This regular "wait," more or less prolonged, twice a day, sufficed to reveal to H—— that the "food trap" in his cell was insecurely fastened up.

I should state here that it had been the rule at Wakefield under the old *régime* to use these traps, which were breast high, to communicate with the occupant of the cell without unlocking the cell door. By this means the regular meals were passed through; the raw materials for work also; the manufactured goods were handed out when completed, and the tools which had been in use during the day. These traps had been condemned by us as a weakness, and orders had been given to abolish them and screw them up. The lock by which they had hitherto been opened and closed was left.

The discovery that H—— made was that the bolt of this lock did not shoot quite home, and that it would be possible to remove the screws while he was detained from time to time in the doorway. Clearly the vicious system of the "food trap" was to blame, and the imperfect attempt to screw them was only a secondary error.

To deal with the trap was his first business. He extracted the screws, but left them where they were, loose, so that he might take them out when he chose, as he could also slip back the bolt. When the time came for action he made the trap practicable, but fastened a shoe lace inside, with which he could lower or raise the flap at will. He had found out also that by slipping his arm through he could approach the cell lock from the outside. As usual, the lock did not show at all inside.

To get out it was essential to unlock the cell door, or pick the lock with a skeleton key. This must be manufactured, and from such materials as he could lay his hands on. He



availed himself of the iron hoop of a small wash tub he was allowed to keep in his cell for the purpose of soaking the leather he used. With his shoemaker's file he cut a narrow strip from the iron hoop, and moulded it as he desired, filing it down, and bending and twisting it into shape. Then he served it with wax thread, so as to form a handle to hold when working it at the lock, which he did at night. At last, after fitting and adjusting it exactly, he found that his skeleton key would open the lock, even when "on the double" or slotted.

When all was ready he watched and waited, until the night patrol had passed him and proceeded on his rounds, to make good his exit from his cell. At the door he found the remainder of his shoemaker's tools, which, according to custom, were deposited outside, and from these he selected a cobbler's knife and a file. His next task was to get outside the building, and he chose the way to the roof, making for the storey above, where, as he knew, there was a cell in communication with the heating apparatus above, reached by a ladder through a trap door. The cell was open, he walked in, climbed up, drew the ladder after him, and was soon among the hot water pipes under the roof. To cut through was not easy, and unfortunately for himself he made much noise hammering and breaking the slates.

This gave the alarm. The night patrol woke to the fact that something was wrong, and called up the night guard. They went in a body towards the suspicious sounds, and actually entered the cell in the top storey, through which H—— had reached the roof. Clearly he was at work there above, but beyond reach, for he had taken the ladder up with him, and, when another was brought, a great hole in the roof showed where he had got through. Pursuit followed along the slates, but the fugitive was nowhere in sight on the roof. As a matter of fact, he had gone down to the ground level, sliding by a gutter pipe and by the sewer vent pipe, which had not been recessed into the brick wall, although it is an axiom in prison construction to leave nothing showing that can be used as a means of descent.

His further progress was unimpeded. He was now in

the prison vegetable garden, and, crossing it, reached an empty house, a vacant prison quarter, broke in, ran upstairs to the first floor, on a level with the boundary wall, got out and on to it, whence he dropped down into a narrow lane leading to the high road. Without slackening speed, he ran on just as he was, in shirt, trousers, and shoes. He had gained "the key of the street," and made at once for another part of the country. He was next heard of in the south, under circumstances that shall be set forth presently.

One curious feature of this escape was that, having closed his cell door behind him, there was nothing to show which man had escaped, or from which cell. It became necessary to unlock a great number of cells before the empty one was discovered, examination through the inspection plate, or spy hole in the door, being insufficient at night, when there is no light inside. The fact of the evasion was at first no clue to the manner in which H—— had accomplished it. But the details, as I have given them, were gradually brought to light by my inquiry. Another strange incident was the farewell addressed by the fugitive to the Governor. He had written on his slate a letter couched as follows:—

"Sir,—To prevent any innocent person from being accused of having aided me, provided I succeed, I shall leave the key so that you shall know how I escaped. The reason I am going is to make known a valuable invention worth millions to the public. It would be of no use my offering it to the authorities at the gaol."

This piece of bombast had, of course, no foundation in fact. He had made no great invention, beyond that of cleverly finding a way out of a presumably well-guarded and well-planned place of durance.\*

This was not his only escapade. He was caught a few weeks later in the very act of burglary, at Canterbury, taken red handed with his plunder stuffed away in a sack, which he carried on his shoulder, thereby arousing the suspicion of a passing policeman. He was committed to the old gaol in the cathedral city, and was soon recognised as the hero of

\* I have told the story of this escape, but under fictitious names, in my "Secrets of the Prison House" (Chapman & Hall, 1894).



the Wakefield escape. While awaiting trial for the burglary he gave a fresh proof of his powers in prison breaking. He found, on careful examination of his cell, that it was furnished with a grating as a fresh-air inlet, just above the level of the floor. The mortar surrounding this grating seemed to him old and perished, and he attacked it with a scrap of iron he had picked up in the exercising yard, picking it bit by bit till he loosened the bricks one by one, and could remove them bodily. To prevent detection, he replaced them and held them *in situ* by means of a putty compounded of chewed bread. When at last, by constant, patient industry, he reached the outside course of bricks, he had a practicable hole, sufficient to allow of his creeping through into the yard. He dragged behind him his blankets, already conveniently torn into long strips, and when he emerged half-way to freedom he made for the boundary wall, being careful to elude the night watchman patrolling the enclosure. The knotted length of blanket was thrown on the top of the boundary wall, where it caught, so that H—— could climb up, draw it after him, and lower it again on the far side. Once more he had effected his escape, but not for long. He tried to leave the country by shipping as a stowaway on an outward bound vessel, but was discovered, and put on shore at Dover, whence he started upon tramp inland, but fell into the hands of the county police.

Wakefield was the scene of another notable escape, notable not only from the manner of it, but from the fate that ultimately befell the fugitive. The reception ward at this prison was alongside the boundary wall, which, indeed, formed part of the building. In the centre of this ward was a circular ventilator leading up to the roof, a wide aperture so high up that it had never been barred. It occurred to one of my colleagues, Colonel Hankin, that this was a weak spot, and he recommended the insertion of a cross bar. The work was undertaken, but while it was in the doing, and before the bar was fixed, the idea was suggested to a prisoner, who was employed as reception cleaner, that he might take advantage of the orifice. This could be reached by placing one cell table above another, and, being at times left very

much to himself, he tried it, and, by dint of his great strength, lifted himself up into the ventilator. Thence he passed easily into the roof, and out, dropping without difficulty into the road beyond the boundary wall. The hue and cry was soon raised, but the fugitive eluded all pursuit, and was never run to ground until he had committed a fresh, and most serious, crime. A year later the country was greatly shocked by the news that a prisoner had murdered his warder in the Strangeways Prison, Manchester, by making a very cold-blooded and atrocious attack upon him from behind. When in due course he was arraigned for trial, he was identified as the man who had escaped from Wakefield through the ventilator.

I will here go back a few years, and say a word or two about the first escape that came under my own notice. It occurred at Chatham one day, on the island, when a man suddenly disappeared from his party, and from under the very nose of the warder in charge. We knew afterwards that he had slipped behind a stack of bricks, thrown off his prison clothing all but his shirt, and walked away in a pair of incomplete trousers made by himself from scraps of cleaning rags. He got off without let or hindrance from his many keepers standing around. I shall never forget the scene; the first whistle of alarm sounded by the officer who had missed his man, and immediately answered from every quarter of the works; the hasty collection of the hitherto dispersed convicts into groups, each under the eye and within the very reach of the warders; the civil guard, or sentries, on their lofty platforms, giving the danger signal, a carbine raised by the two hands crosswise over the head. By joining two or three parties together under the command of one, other warders were released to prosecute the search; one went into the prison to report and send a full description of the fugitive to the police.

In this case all the steps taken proved fruitless, but the fugitive, as so often happens, was eventually captured for a fresh offence, and at the other end of the country. He had had the advantage of the start, which counts for much, and he had gained it by changing his clothes. Disguise comes



first and foremost in the aids to escape. It has been obtained and utilised in the strangest ways. The story runs that a convict got clear away from Dartmoor by breaking into the doctor's house and laying hands on the latter's naval uniform, which fitted him well, and took him a long distance on the road. Another is a little more far fetched, but I have heard it vouched for by people who professed to know the facts. The Deputy-Governor of Millbank in old days was a retired officer, who held a place at Court, where he appeared from time to time in resplendent uniform. A convict inmate somehow persuaded the Deputy-Governor's servant to purloin the uniform and hand it over, but the abstraction was discovered just in time. A clever escape was made by a female prisoner in Millbank by stealing a full set of the matron's clothes. This prisoner was the "cleaner," or servant, who had regular access to the matron's quarters, where she easily laid hands upon the necessary disguise, a pretty costume, a becoming hat, and all the rest of the outfit. When dressed, she boldly went to the inner gate, called herself the matron's friend, "on a visit to her," and was then permitted to walk out unchallenged. This woman, when recaptured, declared she had yielded to a sudden impulse when she saw her opportunity, and was in such a hurry that she would not wait to take off her prison dress, but put the disguise over it. The only real change she made was to remove her prison shoes, a certain tell-tale had she worn them when passing the gate.

To elude observation at the start is another manifest advantage, and it has been very variously attempted, although not always compassed. I have known an intending fugitive to be built into a stack of bricks by his fellows, who rapidly covered him up when he laid himself down. At Dartmoor, when it was a war prison, a French prisoner was covered bodily by the new work in progress at a chimney breast, which, the mortar being still "green," he threw down the same evening without difficulty. At Portland once a convict was lost; he had escaped from his party, and yet it seemed impossible he could have left the Bill. After a long search of the many hiding places, the civil guard took to prodding

the ground at spots near where he was first missed, and were rewarded with a sudden shout of pain. They had caught their man, buried a foot or two down.

The quick wit to recognise a chance offered, and turn it to good account, is a potent ally in escape. I once saw a cell window at Oxford prison through which a clever man had won his way. The window frame was of cast iron; beyond it on the far side were iron bars wide enough apart to allow a man to slip through. He first fixed his jacket against the window frame with wedges made out of his cell stool, and then converted the plank bed into a battering ram, which broke the ironwork noiselessly. The passage free, he climbed up to the sill and slipped through the outer bars. A half-witted prisoner at Hull was in a basement cell rendered semi-dark by an iron shutter bolted down. A bolt was removable by breaking the catch, and supplied a formidable weapon, which served him to demolish the cell ventilator, and allowed a narrow space for him to creep through. This poor creature could make no further use of his liberty, but walked straight up to the gate, from the inside, and begged a piece of tobacco from the gatekeeper.

Luck is sometimes against the fugitive. I remember the case of a man who had got out of his cell into the prison yard, by some means never ascertained, and had broken into the ladder shed by smashing the padlock. The ladder helped him to climb to the top of the boundary wall, but he could not draw it up after him, and he was obliged to risk a drop on the other side. In falling he broke his ankle, but luck brought a friend down the street, who helped him to crawl away. Now the luck turned, for, when snugly put to bed in his own home, the news of his injury brought the police, who knew he ought to be in gaol. Another man, in dropping from a boundary wall into a field, fell upon a cow grazing exactly underneath him. Her back gave way, he slipped off on to the grass, and she settled down on top of him, holding him there, with a broken leg, until his shouts brought the assistance that ended all his chances of escape.

As I have said above, there was a mystery as to this first man's escape from his cell in the main block of buildings,



and I could never bring myself to believe it could have been effected without the connivance of an officer. If so, it was the only instance of such disloyalty that came under my notice. I have heard rumours of warders supplying false keys, but the charge was never substantiated. It was said that when the great forgeries were perpetrated on the Bank of England by the Americans, Bidwell and Macdonnell, a very large sum was offered as a bribe to the warders in Newgate, and that a similar attempt was made to corrupt one of the staff at Dartmoor. These forgers were supposed to have put away safely and secretly a large part of their booty, and refused, until they were themselves free, to give information by which it could be drawn out by their confederates. Stories of this kind have been told before of the hidden proceeds of robberies.

Luck, on the other hand, is sometimes on the side of the prisoner. An inmate of the Northallerton prison in the North Riding, was literally invited to escape. He was a clever artisan, and was employed in the "yard" outside the prison proper, at the end of which was a gate that led to the Governor's quarters and the Court House beyond. This was in the nature of a security door, and ought to have been kept on the double lock, with a bolt or bar on the far side. Through some inconceivable carelessness it was left one day simply on the latch. The temptation was, naturally, too strong for the caged gaol bird. He turned the handle, and walked out a free man. He had the still greater good fortune to escape observation for so long that pursuit was useless. What happened to him afterwards was never accurately known; he certainly was never recaptured, but reports were current that he had gone out of the kingdom, and had been seen in Belgium.

Marvellous ingenuity has been displayed by prisoners in manufacturing the means and accessories to facilitate escape. Picklocks have been fabricated from the most unpromising materials: scraps of hoop iron, a morsel of the steel in a woman's stays, of crinoline wire, bits of wood, slate, or tin. It is on record that a convict successfully copied a cell key, constructing it with a couple of rusty nails

and some string, from seeing the chaplain carry his key negligently in his hand when paying him a visit. Dangerous weapons have been manufactured from the strangest materials: the wooden spoons are of hard wood, turned, and the long, straight handle has been sharpened to a fine point that served to give a terrible wound. A razor edge has been set upon the common tin knife of daily use; excellent razors (I have two in my possession now) have been made from scraps of rusty hoop iron, the desire to shave being keen with men who cannot bear the close clipping of the scissors which nowadays is the limits of the barber's skill. Razors at one time were given into the prisoner's cell, so that each man might shave himself, but the practice was discontinued when a convict at Chatham sliced off four of his fingers, and rolled them out with the returned razor under the cell door.



## CHAPTER XXII.

## HOMICIDES AND HANGMEN.

**A Murder in Prison by a Homicidal Maniac—Demeanour of Condemned Prisoners—Craving for Tobacco—Recollections of Charles Peace—Other Homicides—The Psychology of Murder—The Effects of Solitary Confinement—About Hangmen—A Talk with Marwood—Another Hangman—Why Have a Public Executioner?**

THE missions entrusted to me were of varied character, some pleasant enough, as when I had to meet the local authorities to settle questions of site for new prisons, or decide whether a locality should be accorded the privilege of holding quarter sessions. Now and again it was my duty to be present at an inquest, or attend at an assize court, to answer questions put by the judge. One of my most ghastly recollections is of a murder committed by a homicidal maniac upon a fellow prisoner, who was one of his guards. The case opened up a chance of censure upon our prison arrangements, and I was desired to attend the coroner's inquest to watch the proceedings, and, if necessary, offer explanations.

The murderer was a man named Sissons, who had shown himself weak-minded on reception, when he attempted to commit suicide in his cell. After this he was placed "under observation" and "in association" with two companions, who lived with him, and kept him constantly in view. He had arrived in the October of one year, and in the following March, there being no doubt as to his hopeless condition, he was certified as insane, and application was made for his removal to Broadmoor Asylum; while he was awaiting the order for transfer the tragedy occurred.

One of his two attendants was a man named Turner, who had been with him uninterruptedly from his first arrival,

and thought that he knew him thoroughly. Turner bore a good prison character, and was known as a quiet, inoffensive man, a little weakly, and under medical treatment himself, but quite fit to bear his part in the guardianship of the lunatic. The second guard, M——, was new to the work, but also a well conducted prisoner, with a good idea of his responsibility as a watchman. On the very night of the murder, after "locking up." M—— had questioned whether it would be right or safe for both of them to turn in and sleep, but Turner had no fears, declaring that Sissons was quite harmless. The lunatic was already lying down, as he had been put to bed after a bad epileptic fit, and had dozed off. Then the other two plank beds were prepared, Turner's parallel to Sissons', M——'s in the corner opposite.

M—— lay watching till half-past nine, when sleep got the better of him, and he turned his face to the wall. He awoke quite suddenly, roused by a strange, short cough, really Turner's expiring groan, and, starting up, saw the madman standing over him, with a cell stool uplifted, prepared to strike a second blow. Although the deed was already done, M—— jumped to his feet, and closed at once with Sissons in a life and death struggle, crying aloud for help: "Here! Here! I am in the dark with a madman," for the gas had been extinguished in the scuffle. M—— presently managed to hold off his assailant and reach the alarm bell. Then the night patrols broke in, a couple of warders, and amongst them the murderer was secured.

The cell was left intact, nothing was touched or moved, and I viewed it three days later when I reached Leeds. The sight made a lasting impression on me; there was a horrible realism about it. The three beds on the floor, the tumbled bedclothes, the lethal cell stool, the bloodstains all over the place. The attack had been as fierce and furious as it was sudden and unexpected, and the single blow had sufficed to kill the slumbering victim. In sharp contrast to this scene of violence was the abject, helpless condition of the wretched lunatic, when he appeared before us. He stood there moody and silent, staring with vacant



face and lack-lustre eyes at the coroner and jury. It was the only time that I had been brought into such close touch with homicide, and its perpetrator. The verdict was, of course, one of wilful murder against Sissons, but he was obviously not responsible, and he presently was relegated to Broadmoor, where he died.

No blame was visited upon the prison authorities. The system followed was unsatisfactory, and from henceforth it was ordered that prisoners should not be employed as attendants in lunacy cases, but that warders should perform the duty, and be on duty, awake and alert continuously, two by day and two by night, a severe strain upon the prison staff, and temporary officers were generally appointed for the purpose. This practice had its objections, as, although pensioners were obtained where possible, they were not always to be found. Men strange to the work, and of an inferior stamp, were hired to do the watching. The interior of the cell was kept under observation from without, by means of the "inspection plate," or the "judas," an eyehole in the door, and mischance was reduced to a minimum. Latterly, a system of lining the cell walls with thick matting, akin to the padded cell, was adopted, and the insane and weak-minded man located therein was protected against himself without endangering his companions.

This case of Sissons was unique in my experience; he was the only murderer I came across on the very theatre of his crime, but I saw numbers in the various stages of their passage to the gallows. I never actually attended an execution, although, naturally, I had numerous opportunities. More than once I have reached a town, the prison of which I proposed to inspect next day, and have known that before my arrival its population would have been reduced by one. I would awake in the early morning, with a vague sense of acute discomfort, and gradually realise that a dread tragedy was about to be enacted, and as the hour drew on to eight, I pictured to myself the poor wretch pinioned, the procession formed, headed by the chaplain intoning the burial service, and I knew that as the clock struck the bolt would be drawn, and all finished effectually and expeditiously.

The demeanour of murderers in the dock has been watched often enough with cold-blooded curiosity since the days of Selwyn. A great actor of my acquaintance told me he liked to be in court at a murder trial, so as to study the face and manner of the accused when fighting for his life against the law. Such persons would have envied me my opportunities of seeing, and, if I chose, discoursing with Cain in the privacy of a prison cell, a privilege I was glad to forego as I went my rounds, and except when some especial application or request was made by one of them, I passed on, after the conventional question, "Have you anything to ask me or say to me?"

Strange requests have been made to me in these circumstances. A woman, jointly guilty with her paramour in an atrocious baby farming case, begged that she might be regularly married to her accomplice before she went to execution. I remember that when the man was invited to express his opinion he demurred, and at last refused to take part in the tardy ceremony. Complaints were frequently made, for the most part petty and frivolous. One condemned man worked himself into a perfect fury because he was not permitted to feed the birds outside his cell window with bread crumbs. He had a very violent temper. A butcher by trade, he swore to the warder who had thwarted him that he longed to stab him to the heart with his knife and lick the life blood from the blade. The murder that had brought him to the gallows had been committed with his knife.

It is commonly supposed that a convict under sentence of death is denied no reasonable request in regard to his food. I have heard of a Frenchman who lived high while awaiting the guillotine, but as this story states that he devoured a whole roast fowl at breakfast on the last morning, I am inclined to discredit it altogether, for in France the last morning comes without the slightest warning, and unless the condemned should happen to hear the carpenters at work upon the scaffolding in the square he knows nothing of his impending fate till the Governor enters his cell with the fateful words: "C'est pour aujourd'hui," and the descendant



of Sanson, the *exécuteur des hautes œuvres* as he is grandiosely styled, proceeds to perform *la toilette des morts*, to cut the hair close, so that it may not turn the edge of the descending knife of the guillotine.

A frequent request is for tobacco, the weed so strictly tabooed within our prison walls, and it would be cruelty to withhold the comfort of a smoke from the man who is on the brink of the grave. The concession rests with the medical officer of the prison, and he is generally indulgent, although I have known him refuse on the grounds that there was no medical reason, a perfectly sound objection, but rather cruel and far fetched. If it was left to me to advise, I invariably recommended the issue of the tobacco. Stimulants might be and were given, even on the very morning of the dread ceremony, in cases where the strain was too severe upon the wretched sufferer.

I saw the notorious Charles Peace a few days before his execution, and remember him as an old man of venerable appearance, for he had grown a snow white beard during his long imprisonment, after his leap from the train at Shire-oaks, when he broke his legs. I found him in a state of great exasperation because he had asked in vain for the visits of certain friends. This privilege, and, indeed, the whole of a condemned prisoner's treatment, was in the hands of the Visiting Committee of magistrates, and beyond my province, as I told Peace. He was still greatly dissatisfied, and declared that if the Governor did not oblige (although it had nothing to do with the Governor), he would not oblige the Governor by making a confession of a matter much on his mind, no less than that a "young man," as he called him—Habron, in fact—was "doing time" innocently at Portland for an offence, a murder, he (Peace) had committed. I pointed out to him that it was between him and his conscience whether, when at the point of death, he would allow such gross injustice to go unredressed. The visits he asked for were, I think, granted, but in any case Peace took the necessary steps, by sworn deposition, to rehabilitate Habron, who was at once released, with the substantial solatium of £800.

Charles Peace filled a large place in the criminal annals of his time. His was an extraordinary personality. Small, almost diminutive in figure, of mild and unassuming manners, he was of most determined character, ruthless, brutal, persistent as a beast of prey. There was something Satanic in his methods, in his sagacity and self reliance. He invariably "worked alone," he could trust no one, and when necessity arose he was more than equal to the occasion. There is strong reason to believe that he committed many more murders than ever came to light, and he put as small a value on human life as such miscreants as Arvil and Lacenaire, the latter of whom boasted that he thought no more of killing a man than of drinking a glass of water. He was a great organiser, had several homes and bases of action, and a different name and identity at each, and, in some cases, a different wife. He was a connoisseur and virtuoso, and in his extensive buglaries picked out the best things for removal. His collection of violins was quite valuable, and he had a fine taste in tobacco and choice brands.

I am moved to bring in a story here which I have told elsewhere, but it is an apt illustration of his strange character. While he was detained at Wakefield prison, he was arguing with the Chaplain (the Rev. M. Bullock, who gave me the facts himself) on the uselessness of telling the truth. "When I was Mr. Brown, of Peckham" (one of his many aliases, supported by the disguise of the hook, substituted for his lost hand), he said, "I paid a visit one day to my chemist. I was smoking an excellent cigar, and was complimented upon it by the chemist. 'Good enough,' I admitted. 'I stole it' (it was quite true), whereat he laughed merrily, and said he wished I would steal some for him. In the way of business I came across a few boxes of a first-class brand, and I gave one to the chemist, who was more than ever amused when I told him I had stolen it for him. He did not believe me, but I had."

In my wanderings to and fro I came across many types of murderers, and I propose to introduce a few sketches of them, drawn from the life. Here is one: A woman, who



was doing a subject in water colours, laying on the paint with much self satisfaction, waving her head to and fro in accordance with the lines she drew, and smiling blandly. Her eyes were hard steel-grey, her lips thick and red, the lower hanging down, and showing a bad set of teeth. It was a weak, vapid sort of face, yet with no particular vice in it. Only she was a poisoner, a wholesale poisoner, whose victims had been little children, and chocolate drops the medium by which she sent them to their death.

Here is another, busy ministering to the wants of her suffering fellows, an unpretending sister of charity in prison dress, and caged within prison walls. It is true that her face is lowering, the jaw square, but her manner is quiet and unobtrusive; she is an excellent nurse, as willing as she is sagacious and attentive. She has an instinctive objection to be watched or observed; at the hint of a strange visitor she hides with extraordinary quickness, as cleverly as a lizard or a reptile runs to ground.

Or look at this feeble old man digging potatoes in the prison garden, harmless, inoffensive, venerable almost in aspect, in spite of his drab clothes, tattooed with the broad arrow, and his blue and red knickerbocker stockings. If you were permitted to converse with him, he would dilate upon the voyages of St. Paul, or tell you that he had written the history of the Papacy down to the Reformation, would prove himself a ripe scholar, a man of letters and of parts. But in a fit of furious madness, goaded to desperation by the nagging tongue of a shrewish wife, he had dashed her brains out with a poker, and was on the point of packing the corpse up in a box to be sent away by parcel delivery, when the deed was discovered.

This great, muscular woman, who, with arms bared to the elbow, is handling delicately, and with all the native skill of a Frenchwoman, the potherbs for the prison soup, murdered her mistress with a single blow. Now she is sullen, but preserves an imperturbable calm. If thwarted or reproved, her fierce, black eyes may flash with murderous threats, but she has full command over herself; if called, she runs with alacrity; she is industrious, patient, seemingly

resigned to her fate. Prison is to her a sanctuary where her evil passions are kept down by stringent discipline, so that they cannot again carry her into a deed which might be followed, like that other, with eternal remorse.

You would not say, on the other hand, that remorse, or even regret, troubled those three prisoners, whose fate once hung by a thread, and whom the common executioner would undoubtedly have visited with the extreme penalty of the law but for the vacillation and irresolution of public opinion. One of them, with the skilful fingers that once plied brush and pencil with no common skill, is drawing out the long, waxed threads, as he works upon the "uppers" of a pair of prison shoes. His face is full of low cunning, his small eyes are restless and shifty; they instinctively seek the ground, rather than meet others bent upon them; but the manner of the man is quite reckless and unconcerned. He seems to be in prison under protest, and appears anxious to explain that he is where he is entirely by mistake. His brother, in a Portland quarry, scappling a block of stone, presents a strong family likeness. He is crafty and cunning in no common degree, as is shown by the furtive glances he casts at his officer, as if to curry favour, the next minute looking on the ground. The wife is in the wash-house, in one of the partitioned recesses of the prison laundry, so designed to ensure the unbroken separate confinement, that most irksome of modern prison restrictions, which was in force where she was. She, too, gazes upwards at a passing face, not resenting curiosity, but rather faintly interested.

The desire to destroy life is, no doubt, differently aroused, but the causes which prompt human beings to kill and slay their fellows follow much the same lines. In some it is an uncontrollable impulse, an action of brutal necessity—some have been tempted by an overpowering sense of injustice, a wrong, real or fancied, for which murder appears the only fitting revenge. Another irresistible temptation is the desire to remove an inconvenient incubus, which threatens to prove an irksome and intolerable restriction. Wainwright's summary disposal of the victim he had wronged is no isolated instance. Or again, the hope of



ultimate advantage, the thirst of gain, and the immediate fruition, have often proved a fatal incentive.

Nor is it only that the cause and impulse to do murder are the same as of old. Even the means by which the deed is committed show little originality. Toxicology may be developed, but the poisons administered are nearly always the same; arsenic continues to be the one most commonly used. When the murderer follows an irresistible impulse of passion, and the deed is suddenly done, the first weapon serves which comes to hand. Bludgeon or poker, pistol or knife—these are still the instruments of guilt. Now the murderer, if he has brooded long over his crime, will display the same ingenuity and devilish cunning in laying his plans. He will strike the blow remorselessly, and consummate the murder with brutal violence if the first attempt has failed. Thurtell, after he had shot his victim, ran after him, threw him down, first sawed at his jugular vein, then jammed the empty pistol into the unfortunate man's head, and "turned it round and round in his brain." After the event, the murderer is perfectly cool and self-possessed, eating supper or other meals with good appetite, and proceeds about his different avocations as though nothing had occurred. Invariably now, as of old, murderers show themselves without bowels of compassion, and with iron nerve in their efforts to dispose of the damning proof of their guilt. When any *cause célèbre* crops up to agitate the public mind, we are frequently reminded of the details of previous affairs. There is often some sickening story of dismemberment and rough and ready butchery; the same desperate attempt to get rid of the accusing corpse. Now, as of old, murderers disport themselves in the clothes of their victims. A black silk dress gives an air of gentility in local society; or a man is apprehended with the murdered man's coat on his back, because it is better than his own.

But the strong resemblance among murderers, as members of the same terrible family, is most vividly displayed when justice overtakes them, and they are in custody, whether upon mere suspicion or strong proof of guilt. There is but little difference among them, whether the crime has

been fully developed to its awful climax, or is the result of some hastily conceived or rashly executed design. The most remarkable feature in them is their astonishing calmness and *sangfroid*. Even when taken red-handed, when the evidence against them is fresh and conclusive, they remain perfectly cool and self-possessed. Many will talk with perfect indifference concerning the occurrence, while disclaiming vigorously all guilty knowledge, and reason as to the motives and probabilities of the case. In countries where it is the custom to bring the accused face to face with his handiwork, a man has been known to gaze perfectly unmoved, and with absolute self-possession, upon the battered or mutilated body; to touch, without a tremor of embarrassment, the limbs; to lift, without flinching, the eyelids of the stone cold corpse. It is on record that in this England of ours a wife, who had helped to decapitate her husband, when shown the severed head, took it in her arms, embracing it, and shedding torrents of tears.

The same strong impulse to escape retribution leads many murderers to shift the blame upon other shoulders if they can. Eugene Aram did this. Part of his line of conduct was to implicate his accomplice. Rimbauer, to screen himself, threw the guilt on to a girl who lived in the same house with him, insisting that she killed the other woman from jealousy and anger, although it was proved that the murdered woman was strong and powerful, and the girl a small, weak person. The difference in the demeanour of the guilty and the innocent is very strongly marked. The former has his story pat, and if he tells it, will tell it with glib fluency, which might count in his favour. He knows the worst, and can count the cost, while the innocent, confused and confounded at the charge brought against him, cannot frame words of defence. A prisoner under examination in an assize court abroad, when taxed with his embarrassed manner and heightened colour, declared that it was quite possible for an innocent man to seem more embarrassed than a guilty one: "The latter knows exactly what he has done; the former is called upon to prove his innocence." The guilty are for the most



part self-possessed and resolute to the end, eager to instruct their solicitors, hopeful probably, eager and excited, anxious to take advantage of every chance. Therefore it is that the sentence falls generally as a surprise upon those whom the law actually adjudges to die. Faith in the astuteness of counsel, the lingering hope that the prosecution may break down, that an obstinate juryman may starve out his colleagues—these are the off chances that buoy up the criminal to the last.

Even to the most stoical, the actual verdict is a terrible shock. All through the trial they have been half dreaming, half disposed to think that the terrible drama in which they are the chief performers is some mere fiction of the brain; the startling reality comes as a shock when the judge dons the black cap and speaks the last solemn words. It is then that women faint and are carried out senseless; that the blood forsakes the cheeks of the most hardened wretch, and his fingers play nervously with the sleeves of his coat. It is very rarely that one is found like Owen, the Denham murderer, who had nerve enough to wave his hand to the judge, and say "Thank ye, my lord," in a most flippant tone, or that a man who has followed every twist and turn in the case remarks to his solicitor, like Palmer, the sportsman and murderer, "The riding did it." As a general rule, this moment is one of the most awful trial, worse even in its supreme bitterness than that dread time when the convict stands upon the scaffold.

After the sentence, and through the closing scenes, the demeanour of a convict may be observed to vary between the two extremes of callous indifference to his fate and the desire to embrace the consolations of religion and endeavour, with more or less humility of spirit, to make his peace with God. Many will still cling desperately to life, having faith in the action of friends petitioning for pardon, on pretence of extenuation or flaws; others very commonly will seek to save their lives by feigning madness, but play their *rôle* generally with such little aptitude or discrimination that they seldom deceive the keen eye of the professional "alienist," the doctor who has made madness his especial study. Of those who

are disposed to accept gladly the ministrations of the chaplain, and upon whom the curtain falls thus meetly employed, little remains to be said, except that they run the risk of falling into the exaggeration of cant. It is, however, the natural and proper ending for these unfortunate men, and such sympathy and commiseration as they deserve cannot well be denied them.

We cannot but feel abhorrence, tinged with a curious wonder, when we hear of convicts who pass to the other extreme. The condemned convict who is perfectly insensible to his fate is a psychologically interesting study, whether this impassivity is the result of an inner want of sensibility or of the stolid resolution not to give in. We cannot but shudder at the callousness of an atrocious villain like Rush, who, when the trial was over, said, "Give me my slippers and the *Times* newspaper," or that other, who begged that he might have a good "blow out" the day before he was hanged, who hoped the day would be fine when he was to be "topped," who was most anxious to hear whether his coffin was made, and whether it was likely to fit. The Denham murderer was so callous that he told his sobbing wife and sorrowing father not to snivel, and reviled the officer with coarse and foul talk. Others have been known to laugh and talk about their deeds, and continue to justify themselves, urging the strong provocation received as an excuse for their crime. These are those who sleep soundly, and eat heartily, to the end. In some cases this ability to sleep may be otherwise explained. It may be the result of exhaustion, following an agony of weeks, that the condemned convict has to be wakened to go to the scaffold, or the appetite may be impaired, as in the case of innocent people who know that inevitable death is near at hand. But, in the case of callous convicts, such as those described above, it is different. Were it not for the decency which now invests the last solemn scene, and carefully eliminates therefrom all that is stagey and theatrical, we should see such men as these emulating their predecessors. The publicity of the execution of former times was a direct incentive to mock and misplaced



heroics. It is not possible now for a Lord Ferrers to wear white satin—his wedding dress—and speak from the Tyburn cart, or for a Jerry Abershaw to ascend the steps with his embroidered shirt thrown open, and a flower between his lips, which he did not remove as he chatted and laughed with the friends he saw in the crowd. But just as the horrors of the old condemned cell, with its double rows of bars, its dark windows, and stone pavement, worn into deep holes by the footfalls of hundreds who have trodden the same ghastly road, just as this old dungeon has been replaced by the ordinary prison cell, light, airy, and clean as a new pin, so the old spectacular performance has disappeared, and except that we hear, through a newspaper report, that Owen tried to run up the ladder two steps at a time, or that Peace complained to Marwood that the rope was too tight, we have done with the murderer when he leaves the dock—unless, indeed, we chance to visit him at his resurrection in Madame Tussaud's.

Murderers are to be met with in large numbers in countries where capital punishment is not practised, notably in Italy and Belgium. It is not an edifying sight to see the survivals of long protracted imprisonment, but, while in Italy many years of durance have broken down health and strength, in Belgium the mind also has given way. The prison *régime* in Italy is not based on solitary confinement for a term of years; prisoners are not shut up in strict separation until the brain reels under the unnatural and inhuman treatment. I had a painful experience at the historic prison of Ghent, to which it was the rule to send all Belgian convicts who had broken down mentally under the rigorous cellular system in force in Belgium. It was a hideous and appalling sight: some seventy feeble, etiolated, melancholy idiots, filling one great room, but so little accustomed to associate with their fellows that they paced the floor singly, or hung about the corners alone, awaiting, in vacant, hopeless resignation, the inevitable, but possibly still remote, hour of release, from the one dread messenger who alone can open the gaol gates.

I have no desire to discuss the vexed question of capital

punishment, but in comparing the penalties of immediate death and death by inches, especially as it is inflicted where the *régime* of solitude obtains, I must give the preference to the former, with all its possible disadvantages, chief among them of course, the chance of judicial error. As for prolonged cellular confinement as a secondary punishment, I range myself on the side of Enrico Ferri, the fervid Italian publicist, who has denounced the cell as "the crime of the nineteenth century." We cling to it still in this country, but under greatly modified and limited conditions. The period for which it is inflicted on penal servitude convicts has been gradually reduced from eighteen months in 1842, when Pentonville, the "model," was built for general imitation, to the six months which is now the more moderate allowance. In the local prisons this segregation, never too strict, perhaps, but always regrettable, has been reduced to one month, after which, orderly industry in association, in great halls and large rooms, is the universal rule. This amelioration was introduced by Sir Evelyn Ruggles-Brise in 1897-8, soon after his appointment as Chief Commissioner of Prisons, in succession to Sir Edmund Du Cane, and it is a source of great satisfaction to me to know that my strong representations and earnest endeavours counted for something in giving practical effect to the change.

From the murderer to the executioner is an easy transition, and I may insert a word or two here about hangmen, with one of whom, at least, I had some acquaintance. This was Marwood, who paid one or two visits to the Home Office when the question of the methods of inflicting capital punishment were under discussion. He was a connoisseur in rope, and greatly preferred to use that of his own selection, as he told us one day when he tried his "noose" on some of us. I shall not easily forget the feeling of the awful cravat around my neck, the horror of it greatly emphasised by the gruesome touch of his twisted, knotty, extraordinarily powerful hands. "It's a first rate article," he wished to impress on us, when we would have no more of his experiments; "I always use the purest hemp; it's what I supply to the Colonies when



they ask for it" (he did quite a trade in "rope"); "quite silky to the touch; none of your rough Manila, which has no grip."

I can see him now, as he stood talking to us, and found it difficult to reconcile his external appearance with his dreadful calling. He looked what he had been, not what he actually was; he was once a local preacher and leading light in one of the little known sects, and had achieved success in the line of pulpit oratory. Be this as it may, he still dressed the part, and in his plain pepper-and-salt overcoat, dark trousers, and his wisp of white neckcloth round his short throat, he seemed capable still of engaging the attention of his audience, a very different congregation from the silent few before whom he performed with so much effect on occasional Monday or Tuesday mornings at eight of the clock sharp. His face was hard, shrewd, but not unkindly. It was strongly marked, rugged almost in its deep lines and furrows; the eyes were quiet, resolute, and penetrating; the mouth grim, firm, and set as one of his own nooses.

I asked him whether he was ever annoyed by people if they recognised him on the road, travelling to the scene of his ghastly business. "Few of 'em know me," he said. "Only once, when crossing to Dublin for a job, and it was found out I was on board there was some talk of throwing me into the sea. But I got out of the way. I never show more than I can help. I like to keep myself to myself, in the background, you understand; they lodge me in a private room in the gaol when I arrive late on Saturday night, and I go off again by the first train after the job is done."

"Do you ever see your 'man' before 'it' comes off?" "Not me, never till the last moment; but I make it my business to get to know about him all I can—his height, his weight, and the rest—so as to arrange. There's so much to be studied—the length of the drop, now—one man will want a longer drop than another, but I am all for a long drop, you know. Calcraft wasn't. Mine was the more humane way. The old plan was to kill by strangling; mine is by dislocation. Death, under my hand, is instantaneous;

not a movement, not a struggle, when he falls. There is no mistake about it."

"But accidents have happened? The rope has broken."  
"They oughtn't to happen, only when bunglers do the job. Of course, there's different sorts of gallows.\* Everyone has their own ideas. There's the double trap and the single trap, and the side trap, and the stage trap; but the double trap's far and away the best of the lot, provided there's plenty of room below. The side trap's what they've got at Manchester, where the whole thing lets down from the wall and we all stand on a sort of hung platform. *He*, you know, stands on the edge, which gives way under him when I pull the bolt. It's much the same with the single trap, only it's fixed over a kind of well. So's the stage trap, where the man stands on a kind of platform, which slides down straight from under his feet. It might clog and catch, and that's why I don't like it. But the double trap is what I like best. There the man stands upon a platform in two halves, which are kept in their places by bolts. I withdraw these bolts by one turn of a lever, the divisions open all at once, falling away on either side, and he drops through. I'd make that the general system, I would,† if it rested with me. There's no other way to make it a thoroughly sure business, and I have pondered and thought over it a good deal, too."

"How did I take to it? To my profession?" (Heaven save the mark—profession!) "I can hardly tell you. Some'd say it was by chance like; I'm more inclined to think it was the will of an all-wise Providence. Why, someone would have to do it, and I've always had my own views on the thing."

"Tried it, perhaps?"

"Well, not exactly in earnest, but by way of practice on myself, and on a friend here and there. I'll show you, sir, yourself, if you'd like to know how it feels."

\* In 1882. The Prison Commissioners have now established a uniform system. The rope also is now provided by the State.

† It is that actually adopted.



I declined hurriedly; I had no wish to feel his fingers again about my throat.

"No? I only thought I could explain it better. Then I heard one day they were short of someone over in Lincoln Castle, in this way of business, so I went and offered myself for the job. It's my own country, you know, and they knew of me down that way, and my experiments, and I went and offered myself; so they gave me a trial. I did that job neatly enough; my endeavours were blessed, so to speak, and I am thankful for it. It gave me a good start, did that first job, and I soon got others. You see, Calcraft was beginning to go off a bit. He was never much in the scientific line; did not think how to improve his own trade. And, as he got on in years, they say he got a bit careless—but it's not my way to asperse those as is passed away."

"Is he dead?"

"Well, not quite so dead as some I have had to do with. But he has passed away out of the profession, and now I am pretty well alone."

"What of that young doctor, down in the West?"

"Him!" Marwood gave a jerk of his finger and thumb which might have meant anything, but the action it suggested to me was that of tightening a noose. "Him, he never was more nor a mere amateur. No, I'm nearly alone in the profession, and I'm sorry for it. There ought to be always some one coming on, who would be competent to take my place when I retire."

I suggested that the time might come when there would be no more gallows, and he indignantly repudiated the idea.

"I can't believe it, sir. They'd never do away with capital punishment. It's all there is against murder. Don't tell me."

"No. But they might decide upon another way of execution. The matter has been discussed already. All this business of yours, the rope, and the drop, and all that, is barbarous and out of date. There's electricity, or a medical man might do the removal by quietly administering poison. Where would you and your successes be then?"

"Not far off, I expect," replied Marwood, with a grin.

"It's not work many people would hanker after, although I've done well enough with it."

Marwood was reputed to have feathered his nest fairly well. His annual receipts were not inconsiderable. From twenty to thirty executions, at a fee of £10, gave him a substantial income, and he had ample leisure for his own trade. The emoluments of the post have never failed to attract candidates for the work, and, at his retirement, numbers applied for it, although there is no "common hangman," no obligation to employ one particular person more than another. The onus rests with the sheriff to provide a "finisher," and he seeks him and engages him how and where he chooses, haunted always with the knowledge that, if he cannot perform the execution vicariously, he will have to do it himself. Indeed, a story is told of some wags in Scotland, who kidnapped Marwood, when due in a certain locality, and kept him concealed so long that the convener (sheriff) grew very unhappy at the prospect before him.

I came across a follower in Marwood's footsteps at one of my prison inspections. There was some doubt as to his treatment, which the Governor referred to me. The man in question had arrived the evening before the execution, and showed himself a little fastidious about his quarters and his supper. He would not be satisfied without a score of oysters, and called for a bottle of champagne, which he topped up with brandy, and still wanted more. Next morning at 6 a.m. he sent out for another score of oysters, drank some more brandy, and, thus fortified, proceeded to perform his dread office. When the drop fell, he looked down into the pit, and said grimly: "That is the seventy-sixth I've turned off in three years." But the recollection did not prevent him from eating a copious breakfast in the gaol, and departing well satisfied with his visit. The question submitted to me was whether the expense of his entertainment should be borne by his employer, the sheriff, or charged to public funds. I forget how it was settled, but I much doubt whether the Treasury footed the bill.

It has never seemed to me that there is any necessity for a "public executioner," to adopt the high-sounding title,



to carry out the fiat of the law. Many years ago I discussed the subject at length in an article in the *Fortnightly Review*, under the heading, "Why have a Hangman?" and I may be permitted, perhaps, to quote some of my arguments.

"Is it fair," I asked, "to the sheriffs, country gentlemen or city magnates, summoned temporarily and for one year only to peculiar functions, to oblige them to select the most promising among a host of candidates, and to risk the odium which would inevitably follow the next bungling attempt at execution? These inexperienced representatives of the majesty of the law should rather find everything ready to their hand; not only perfect machinery working with clock-like accuracy and precision, but skilled experts—men who have acted frequently, or have been carefully trained. In other words, there should be no hangman, no single individual concentrating in himself much shame and disrepute, no wretched being whose name is universally recognised as synonymous with that of the ignominious post he occupied, but several trustworthy and reputable officials, each regularly practised to carry out the duty as it came to his turn. It may be pretty safely asserted that men of this stamp would always be found among the staff of every prison. The only objection to the proposed substitution would be the possible disinclination of prison warders to accept so onerous and so distasteful a duty. But that difficulty, if it really exists, would speedily disappear if the service were invested with sufficient dignity and importance. It should be made almost an impersonal act, performed in the routine of duties, now by this warder, now by that. No odium could thus attach to any one individual, because it would never be certainly known who had been or would be the executioner, while it is very different to volunteer for an unpleasant duty and to execute it under orders. Already warders carry out minor punishments in gaol; they often flog garotters, and, more rarely, prisoners guilty of offences against prison discipline. As a matter of fact, too, prison officers have long assisted at all the preparations for an execution, and after the ceremony it is they who prepare the body for the inquest and the grave."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## IDENTIFICATION OF CRIMINALS.

The System of Identifying Recidivists—Registers of Names and Peculiar Marks—  
The Use of Photography—Identifying Criminals at Holloway—A Group of  
Detectives—A Talk with a Detective Inspector—A "Russian Nobleman" with  
Many Aliases—Tendency of Criminals to Keep to One Form of Crime.

IN 1893 I was selected to form one of a Committee appointed by Mr. Asquith to deal with the identification of habitual criminals, my colleagues being Mr. C. E. Troup, now Assistant Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department, and Mr. M. L. Macnaghten, of the Metropolitan Police, now Assistant Commissioner for Criminal Investigation, with Mr. H. B. Simpson, of the Home Office, as Secretary. Our reference, stated in full, was "to inquire (a) into the method of registering and identifying habitual criminals now in use in England; (b) into the anthropometric system of classified registration and identification in use in France and in other countries; and (c) into the suggested system of identification by means of a record of finger marks." Speaking more at large, we were to examine the practice, as it then obtained in England, for following up old offenders, so that they might be known when re-arraigned, and held to account for previous convictions; we were to visit Paris and become thoroughly acquainted with the system of human measurement as devised by M. Bertillon, and commonly called "Bertillonage," and lastly we were to be instructed by Mr. (Sir) Francis Galton in his application of the principle of "finger prints," the strange fact, established by practical results, that the impression of the inner finger tips is separate and distinct in every human being upon the face of the earth. We



embarked upon the inquiry with alacrity, for it promised to take us over much new ground, and lead us into novel and various investigations.

We began at home, and soon realised that our English methods were then imperfect and incomplete. The identification of those addicted to crime—the habitual criminal, or “recidivist,” to use the French word now in very general use—was mainly dependent upon personal recognition by officials who knew them, and had, as they believed, come in contact with them before. It was the policeman or prison warder who swore to the identity in court of an offender who had previously been convicted, and so brought him under the penalties of recidivism. This recognition was assisted by photography and the register of distinctive marks, but to recognise was essential, and a primary qualification with warders and police was to possess a good memory for faces. A gift of this kind was greatly developed by the circumstances of daily life; the warder sees his prisoners constantly, the policeman grows familiar with evil doers of his own district; the ticket-of-leave system, with the periodical “reporting,” provides a series of personal interviews that easily grows into personal acquaintance. Certain results were obtained by these means, but they were not comprehensive, and they were notably wanting with some categories of criminals.

Thus, while the “local” offenders, the depredators who, for the most part, work their own country; continually pass through the hands of justice, the “travelling” criminal often escapes the processes at work for his recognition, and he belongs to a numerous class. Nothing is more marked in the character of modern crime, and in the practice of those who live by it, than the enlargement of the areas brought under contribution. Space and distance in these days of unlimited communication mean nothing to the highflyer in pursuit of his prey. Crime is very distinctly cosmopolitan; great *coups* start in all the great European capitals, and are executed, now here, now there, by professional practitioners, who pass freely to and fro. It is particularly true with us, for London is the heart and centre, the source and origin, from

which the evil virus regularly proceeds, and ramifies through the whole country. If a "local" wrongdoer sees his way to a big thing, he will call in a London specialist to advise and operate; at certain seasons, when "sport" is "open," at the recurrent epochs of race meetings, fairs, shows, Royal visits, whole swarms of noxious pests issue forth to ravage and bat-ten upon the districts full of their peculiar prey. Under the system, as we found it, these "travellers" or "foreigners," as they were styled locally, were responsible for a great part of the serious crime of the neighbourhood, yet their antecedents, and, therefore, their identification, could hardly ever be traced. These men, who, on the face of it, had deliberately enlisted into the great army of professional crime, and generally for life, were so constantly on the move that only a small percentage were known as habitual offenders when "run in" for fresh crime. The difficulty of identifying local criminals was especially great in London, where an offender might be arrested in a dozen different police divisions, and convicted in a dozen different courts, without being seen twice by the same officer. This led to a special system in regard to the London arrests, of which I shall have something more to say.

"It is probable that all the most dangerous criminals in the country, who are not themselves Londoners, visit London for purposes of crime at some stage or other of their career, and London is the chief, if not the only, resort in England for the most bold and cunning criminals of foreign countries. It is also the residence and place of refuge of most of the travelling burglars and pickpockets, who make excursions to the counties and country towns, and of some who extend their operations to the Continent."\*

Until 1893 the best aids to identification that had been so far devised had been indexes, nominal, and so to speak, physical: (1) a register of names of habitual criminals; and (2) a register of the distinctive marks borne on the person of all who were recorded on the first named list; which, as originally planned, was soon found to be inconveniently large.

\* Parliamentary Report on Habitual Criminals, 1894, p. 9.



The value of these two registers is to be estimated by the fact that, despite the obvious care and the excessive labour expended upon their preparation, they were very little used by the various police forces throughout the country, to which they were regularly distributed. We found on inquiry that they were disliked not only from the trouble they entailed, but from the barrenness of results attained by those who consulted them. The failure was due very much to the reasons I have given; the tardiness in publication, the wilderness of details leading to prolonged, and often disappointing, search. We made it our business to examine the majority of the principal police officers, and to visit a number of provincial police headquarters. In many large cities the authorities kept their own records, relying little on the central registers issued from the Home Office, and assisted greatly by photographs where it was lawful to take them, but it was among our final recommendations that the power to photograph all "remands" should be conceded by the Legislature.

A word as to photography, so commonly believed to be largely effective in identification. As a matter of fact, it is never easy to recognise the likeness in a photograph; there may be a general impression conveyed, but to swear on oath to a person's face as given by the camera is often most difficult. Hence, in our modern practice, a portrait is taken from several points of view, with or without "hair" or whiskers, beard, or moustache; in various costumes, the prison dress, and an individual's private clothing. Even with such precautions the result may be misleading. It has been greatly obscured, moreover, by the not strange reluctance of the "subject," the sitter, to "give himself away," inclining him to twist or caricature his features, or even to refuse positively to be "taken." Stratagem has then to be applied, and I have within my experience one case where the trick was done by fixing the camera at a cell window, but carefully concealed from the yard outside, in which the prisoner was exercising round and round, and when he crossed a particular spot, prearranged as exactly opposite the apparatus, he was "caught" by the lens. On

some occasions actual force was necessary, and no doubt the clever drawing of the "Bashful Model" will be in the minds of many, the work of my old friend, Mr. Luke Fildes, R.A., inspired by a photograph I gave him many years ago, representing a prisoner struggling in the arms of a posse of policemen, who were holding him before the photographic machine.

In the metropolis the agencies for identification were more elaborate, and for obvious reasons. The duty was more complex and difficult in an area twenty times as large and a population ten times as large as that of any other urban police district. London, moreover, as I have said, is the happy hunting ground for the worst criminals; the great commercial and financial centre of the world offers innumerable and gigantic prizes to depredators waging perpetual war against the property and possessions of others. The London police are both local and imperial, with duties extending far beyond the limits of the metropolis; for they have to respond to appeals for assistance from outside jurisdictions, from the country, the Continent, and the other side of the Atlantic. By degrees they had collected a great mass of facts, as available records of crime and habitual criminals. These were prepared at Scotland Yard, and were independent of, but supplementary to, the official guides already spoken of, produced at the Home Office. The London police had their own alphabetical register of names; they had an extensive gallery of photographs, a very elaborate register of distinctive marks, and they were further served by a personal inspection, made tri-weekly, of all persons arrested in London and remanded to Holloway prison for safe keeping, pending further inquiry.

The register of names differed in nowise from that described, but the record of marks, being kept up to date, and of more convenient form, was much more useful than that prepared at the Home Office; the information was tabulated, and more readily extracted from the simple facts supplied. The photographic records were voluminous in the extreme—at that time there were fourteen albums in use,



each containing 5,000 portraits, ready for immediate use, and a reference library of ninety volumes, dating back to 1864, each containing five hundred photographs, with complete descriptions. The contents of these albums were classified and indexed to assist search, which was, nevertheless, exceedingly tedious, and often most disappointing—a search would be repeated again and again for days together. It was stated in evidence before our Committee that on one particular day twenty-one police officers made twenty-seven searches, and succeeded in identifying only seven persons from the photographic albums. A total of  $57\frac{1}{2}$  hours was expended on the task, giving an average of two hours per person sought, and more than eight hours for each identification.

In this matter of photographs, it should be mentioned here that they were largely used in connection with the "route forms," a very general practice, especially with provincial police, of circulating the particulars of a suspicious individual arrested, whose criminal identity was still doubtful. A "route" was chosen along which an inquiry was sent on its travels, passing on from one police headquarters and prison to another, where it was brought under the eye of as many detective officers or private warders as possible, each of whom was invited to examine and make remarks. The "route" form gave a detailed description of the individual, and, wherever it could be obtained, a photograph was affixed. Sometimes these inquiries were spread broadcast through the country, emanating both from chief constables and from prison governors, and, as a rule, with rather meagre results. Little more than half the cases "routed" ended in recognition. The practice was more general in the country districts, for in London, where by far the largest number of arrests of suspicious characters were made, the route form was not much used; Scotland Yard relied rather on the identification resulting from personal inspection by practised and experienced officials.

I have assisted at many of these interesting ceremonies, which, at my time, took place at Holloway Prison, the far-famed "Castle" of criminal parlance, that handsome,

pseudo-mediaeval stronghold, with its battlemented towers and forbidding portals, which is the chief ornament of the Camden Road. It was my duty to visit the prison periodically, and I often timed my inspections to coincide with those of the detectives and prison warders. Of the first named there were twenty-two, one from each of the Metropolitan Police divisions, also an inspector from Scotland Yard and six officers of the City Police, while warders came from the prisons of Wormwood Scrubs, Pentonville, Wandsworth, and Chelmsford. The joint action of the two classes was well designed, for, if the prisoner's identity had escaped the constable who arrested him, it often was known to the warder who had had him in charge previously.

I used to think as I drove up to the prison gates of a detective, or of a stage manager anxious to be right in his local colour. Here were the veritable Simon Pures, the Buckets, and the Hawkshaws, and the official Sherlock Holmeses, mostly well-built, straight-limbed, often burly men, with the shoulders held square, the erect bearing of men who had been drilled, and that peculiar, firm footfall and rather slow-moving regulation gait of the constable on his beat, for all had begun in the blue uniform; they had all learnt the rudiments of their profession in the regular round of police duty. Their faces have all a certain family likeness, all with the usual variety of feature to be seen in any group of twenty or thirty men alike possessing traits in common; quiet, observant eyes; set, close shut lips; a general air of thoughtful reticence. In outward appearance they differ, especially as regards costume—each has followed his own taste in dress. One is in "dittoes," of a none too modest plaid; another wears a long check ulster; a third in a rather frayed frock coat, with a bowler hat. The fashion in hats and boots varies greatly. The "stove pipe" is not absent, soft hats, straw hats abound; some carry umbrellas, many thick sticks of a suggestively useful size. They are, in short, as mixed and medley a lot as one would meet at any street corner, and undistinguishable from the rest of the crowd. This is, no doubt, a wise proceeding for men whose mission is to watch, and "shadow," and pry about in pursuit



of their business. But it may be doubted whether our detectives generally escape detection themselves from the quarry at whose heels they are, and the ceremony at Holloway may be taken to cut both ways; if the police can track their game, the game returns the compliment.

There is a distinction, however, in the principal agent, the Inspector from Scotland Yard, who, on the morning I am describing, is *sui generis*, and by no means cast in a conventional mould. Only the initiated would recognise Mr. J—— as a detective officer; he is certainly not one of the ordinary, commonplace sort. He is admirably turned out, spick and span from head to foot, from his spruce, shiny hat to his brightly varnished boots; he wears a well-made claret coloured frock coat, his smart tie sports a fine scarf pin, the memento, doubtless, of some good bit of detective work, for this is an officer of cosmopolitan experiences, with many striking successes in his varied record. His duties have often taken him beyond the Atlantic, and he is, perhaps, as well known and as much respected in New York as in London, while his frequent visits to the great Republic have told upon him, not unpleasantly, by adding that suspicion of independence, that air of "quite as good a man as you are," which is noticeable in all American officials. But he is very affable, well mannered, and obliging; he is full of information, and can tell you some queer stories of the "crooked gentry" we have come to see.

The parade of prisoners is now ready in the great exercising yard of the prison, a level stretch of bright green-sward under the dark boundary walls; grass thrives well in gaol, and so do sunflowers, which, standing straight and tall to a height of six or seven feet, are a notable feature of the Holloway prison garden. It is a "march past" rather than a parade, for the whole body of prisoners slowly circle round and round the outer or widest circle of the stone-paved paths that are marked out from the grass; a march past the little group of reviewing or inspecting officials collected in one corner of the yard.

Our inspector knows many of them, whatever their present appearance, and it must be understood that the

criminal is a Protean being, who constantly changes his skin, often through astuteness, more often through the force of adverse circumstances, such as a long run of persistent ill luck, when nothing has prospered in his nefarious trade. All here may be inwardly similar in pursuits and evil tendencies, but in outward appearance they greatly differ. A few, very few, are in the prison uniform, the bright, rather garish blue suit, which is allotted to the unconvicted, and which is sufficiently distinctive in case of escape, but misses the degrading features of the familiar drab, spotted over with the Government broad arrow. For many reasons, a "trial" prisoner is permitted, nay encouraged, to wear his own clothes; only where these are hopelessly ragged or disgustingly dirty is the prison blue insisted upon. Uniform always robs men of their individuality, bringing them down to a dead level of monotonous resemblance, and this tends to defeat the object of this parade. Now we can pick out easily many different types; the coster, who is probably none, but has assumed the Chevalier garb as a cloak to his real profession, that of burglary; the artisan, still in his green baize apron, also a disguise assumed to cover some unavowable trade; a dozen or more unmistakable roughs, in corduroys and velveteens, some in rags, loping round in that dropping dot-and-go-one gait peculiar to the street loafer hanging around for any chance (dishonest) job that offers; some of these are in degenerate suits of dittoes; one or two seafaring men, one an unmistakable foreigner, dark skinned, with ear-rings, and gleaming eye-balls turned back, like a fierce beast in a cage; one or two quite well, even fashionably dressed, in frock coats, tall hats, looking so eminently respectable and well-to-do that one wonders to see them here, and asks why they are "in."

"That young chap with the tall hat on the back of his head?" the inspector repeats my query, looking hard at this rather uncommon type, who lounges nonchalantly along with his hands in his pockets, his trousers turned up over his drab gaiters, and the perfectly unconcerned look of one who knows the case against him is strong, and has made up his mind for the worst. "That? Ah, yes; he is charged with



a gigantic forgery—a bank clerk; son of a military officer, nephew of an Irish baronet—not an old lag.”

“And these two?”

They are not next to each other in the long Indian file, but I have paired them because they are so much alike in appearance. Both are showily dressed, in rather sporting, “down the road” fashion; long-skirted drab coats almost to their heels, bowler hats, drab gaiters, smart, spotted ties; both have an indescribable roystering air, which brings them very near the level of gentlemen sportsmen, but just falls short, and leaves them unmistakable “bounders” and cads.

“Call themselves brothers. Honorable Frank and Honorable Reggie Plantagenet. Bogus, of course,” says Mr. J—— contemptuously. “Picked ’em up in the West End, where they’ve been carrying on a great game, defrauding tradesmen and house agents. Got into a first-class residence, stocked it fully with high-class furniture, set up a grand establishment, and never paid a soul. Of course, they’re old hands. Haven’t made ’em out yet——”

“Beg your pardon, sir,” interposes a detective, “I know that second chap. He passed through my hands four or five years ago. Got penal in the name of Jacob Benskin; long firm case.”

“How long a sentence?”

“Seven years.”

“Then he is on ticket now, and wanted for failing to report himself, no doubt. Anyone else know him?”

With this line to lead them, several detectives bring corroborative evidence, and after that the second “Honorable Plantagenet” is easily identified. They are not brothers, only brother convicts, who “did time” together at the “boat,” or in penal servitude, were “turned up” together, discharged, or rather released, into the London area, and who will now, undoubtedly, find themselves in the dock side by side.

Not far off walks another puzzling person; he is tall, middle-aged, with neglected grey hair and ragged moustaches, and his appearance is that of a seedy swell, in very

low water, but he holds himself erect, with no sense of shame, as a man unfortunate, but blameless. His clothes, all black, are rusty and greasy, frayed at the edges, the braid hanging in strips, the bottoms of his trousers cut, and worn ragged, his once smart button boots broken and bulgy, yet refusing to meet over his stockingless feet.

"Pretends to be a Russian," the inspector tells me. "A man of high family—Count or Prince or something—exiled for political reasons, and his family have cast him off to starve. That's his story. Took to swindling and blackmailing, that's why he's here now. He's not known in our records at the Yard, although the photographic albums have been searched through and through this week past. We've never had him, or not for a long time, and he is greatly changed in appearance. I have an idea I can 'place' him, but I'm not positive till I hear from the other side. I fancy I've seen him in the States."

I may as well complete this case here. This "Russian" was really an American, as Inspector J—— presently proved, born somewhere down in the Southern States; a gentleman really, of first-rate education, a fluent linguist, of polished manners and most insinuating address, who had travelled all over Europe, moving sometimes in the very best society, and turning every opportunity to good account. In this way he became possessed of various family and other secrets, on which he based blackmailing demands, and often raised considerable sums. But, by degrees, he had worked out his gold mines, and his latest attempt had failed, and landed him in gaol. It was upon a credulous old lady, to whom he revealed himself as a great personage, unfortunate, and in exile, but conspiring to regain his own, and whom he robbed shamelessly. After his first recognition, his antecedents were easily made out, and it was found that he was a very old hand; had done two periods of penal servitude, and was no stranger to foreign prisons. He had a dozen or more aliases, under which he had operated in the capitals and great cities abroad; he had been called the Count Von Arnhoff, Chevalier Zamertini, Marques de Santa Maria, Seymour, Bouverie, Blackwood, Fitzurse—any name that



was high sounding suited his purpose at the time. It was reported of him, when his identity was fully proved, that he was a most accomplished liar, and told his stories with such a specious resemblance to truth that even the most wary and suspicious people were deceived.

From the male we pass on to the female side, where a much smaller party awaits us, and the women, drawn up in line, can be inspected almost at a glance. There is as much variety in attire, but more tawdry finery, dress is made up of more incongruous and flashy elements, crude colours that fight with each other. Nothing matches; a coarse shawl is thrown over a satin skirt, a showy mantle of cotton velvet and catskin covers a ragged stuff dress, hats and bonnets range between broad brimmed, laden with vegetation, and the torn remnant of a "toque," that hardly covers a few hairs. All, almost without exception, have a depraved and brutalised expression; drink and vice have left their brand upon these sad sisters, commonplace offenders most of them, easily identified, and generally known to the police, their offences drunkenness, brawling, petty larceny, or unavoidable partnership with one or other of the bigger criminals we have seen in the male exercising yard. One, neatly dressed, and in sharp contrast to the rest, is seated; "a lady of title," Mr. J—— whispers. "That forged will case. It will go hard with her," and surely she knows it, for never was despair more plainly written upon face and attitude as she sits there abstracted, with lack-lustre eyes, taking absolutely no notice of us.

"Holloa!" says the Inspector suddenly, "*you've* come back, have you? Same old game?" He is addressing a small bird-faced creature, who bridles up at the familiarity, and replies in a mincing voice, as though she had been carefully trained to say "Potatoes, poultry, prunes, and prisms," "Yes, and I do not understand it at all. I shall appeal at once to the Home Secretary, and demand my immediate release."

"That's ——," says Mr. J——. "Daresay you've often heard of her; her name is constantly in the papers. Always being taken and shut up for the same offence,

obtaining food and lodging by fraud. She goes to the best hotels sometimes, says her baggage and maid will follow, and so on. The second or third day they run her in."

Just now the "lady" has been treated more summarily, for she is still in light opera cloak and white satin slippers, which bear the stains of a night spent in the police cell.

From the detective point of view, there is nothing very remarkable about the females for identification. But my attention is drawn to a woman who has rather a quaint history. She is always committed for the same offence—that of travelling on the line without a ticket—and she has done it again and again, with one sole idea, it is said, to get to one particular prison, where she will find an officer or wardress against whom she has a secret grudge, and who has so far escaped her by transfer to some unknown whereabouts. No one knows exactly the origin of the feud, or what will happen when they meet, but the thirst for vengeance still drives her on, and still she tries a new road, and is still arrested, to move on anywhere when again released.

This seems a suitable place to refer to the curious but strongly marked trait in the criminal offender, to adhere constantly to some particular class of crime. The original choice may be purely accidental, but when the lot is once cast the practice continues. This is so well known at Scotland Yard that classified lists are kept of the various practitioners in each particular line, such as coining, house-breaking, robbery with violence, larceny from lodgings, hotel swindling, and the fraudulent agencies known as long firms and bogus employment offices. Some strange instances may be given of the habit that has become almost stereotyped. I often met an old lady in Derby prison, and elsewhere, whose favourite vice was stealing wedding rings.

She was seventy years of age, and very decrepit, but she was able to move about freely when at large, and was generally accompanied by her daughter or some other confederate. They were always respectably dressed, and they walked boldly into the jewellers' shops and asked to see the rings, for an approaching marriage in the family. While one was choosing, the other was conjuring away and secreting all the



portable property on which she could lay her hands. Their depredations were extensive, but London was their chief preserve. The sport could not have prospered greatly, to judge by the number of times I came across the old woman in custody.

Another woman, repeatedly convicted of a somewhat similar offence, was the "wedding guest," as she was commonly called, from her frequent robberies of wedding presents. She was a lady-like, rather well-favoured person when dressed for the part she played (as I was told, for I never saw her in anything but the prison costume), and was, of course, gifted with consummate cheek, for she did not hesitate to enter any house where a wedding was in progress, and mingle, uninvited, but unabashed, and generally undetected, among the crowd of guests. Her point was the room where the presents were on view, and her thefts were numerous, until the system was introduced of placing a female detective, disguised as lady's maid or hospital nurse, to watch over the precious goods.

A more commonplace criminal was the man who began, in 1856, to steal wheelbarrows, and occasionally garden rollers, a practice he maintained for thirty years, and until the advanced age of seventy-five. I have already mentioned the case of the man on crutches, whose spoil was lifting watches from the pocket. The swindling of hotel and lodging-house keepers was pursued quite as a profession by many women, and there were two particularly notorious offenders whom I can call to mind. One of them was nearly ubiquitous, and was to be met with in almost every prison in the country in turn. Everywhere she displayed the same violent and intractable temper when in custody; her *rôle* was to "do the barmy," to feign unsoundness of mind, and she sought to support her claim by the most persistent misconduct; her habits were as filthy, she was as noisy and destructive, as any of the worst Millbank females I have referred to. The other was the well-known "Tottie Fay," whose unwelcome visits to London hotels consigned her constantly to Wormwood Scrubs, where she found board and lodging without charge. "Tottie" was a supreme

trial to her keepers. She made great pretensions to gentility; "I am a noble lady, of high birth; be gentle with me," were phrases constantly on her lips, spoken in small, mincing accents, and she expressed so much contempt for her fellow prisoners that she was repaid with more than one serious assault. "Don't come anigh me. Don't dare to speak to me, you are common creatures, dirty prisoners; I scorn and despise you." With all that, when she chose she could command the vilest and most abusive language, the most awful oaths, when vexed or brought before the Governor or Visiting Committee. To me she generally sought to be most ingratiating, and invariably addressed me as "Mounseer," with the best French she could muster. Her worst offence was idleness; she would do no work, she never had the time, it was all spent in personal adornment. I can see her now, sitting at the edge of her bed in a hospital cell (she was generally "under observation" as weak minded), her hair dressed with extreme care, tortured into four love locks flattened on each temple, her white cap twisted into some fashionable form, and the long strings plaited and tied most becomingly (as she hoped) under her chin.

Such repeated misdeeds as I have enumerated were, however, white as wool compared to the crimes of the fiends who would poison their relations, even their own children, to obtain the insurance premium. One of these was a doctor, a veritable imitation of Palmer and De la Pommeraye, who, when caught, was sentenced to death, but escaped on some technical plea. He was "commuted," and I remember how, one day when awaiting removal to penal servitude, he calmly requested to be allowed to "resume his water-colour drawing until he was removed."

I may insert here a few words about another class of offenders to be met with constantly all over the country, and who have greatly complicated the question of identification, for they come from no one knows exactly where, they are here to-day and gone to-morrow, and turn up in quite a different place the day after. These are the aliens, the foreign immigrants, the unwelcome, uninvited guests



who trespass upon our shores, and so often abuse our too ready hospitality. These "outlanders" are of various nationalities, who have either drifted to or deliberately invaded our shores, and, whether from necessity or predilection, have fallen into criminal ways. I have come across them in great numbers in gaol, many of them but venial offenders perhaps, but not a few, such as the Lipskis, who have been guilty of the most heinous crimes. As prisoners, their chief characteristic is their resistance to discipline, shown usually in prolonged misbehaviour, extending sometimes to aggravated and even murderous violence. I have met many men of colour, hailing chiefly from the United States, several of them intractable, semi-savage miscreants, who have ended on the gallows. There was one of this type executed at Swansea for killing a lodging-house keeper, and who, before execution, wrote an apology to the widow of his victim, in which he assured her piteously that he never intended "to murder her boss." Another negro perpetrated an atrocious crime on a lonely road in Lincolnshire, the victim being the young daughter of a country clergyman. A black man imprisoned at Exeter persistently defied the authorities, and barricaded his cell so that no one could enter, and he was only brought to reason by the hose pipe, which was introduced through the broken window of his gas light, and eventually cowed him with a steady, drenching stream of water.

One of the strangest characters I ever encountered was a mysterious inmate of Lindsey (Lincoln) prison, whose nationality was never discovered, who spoke no known language, who could give no account of himself, and was to all outward appearance a savage creature, a perfect wild man of the woods. His clothing, when he came in, consisted of mere common sacking; he was barefooted, he had no head covering but the rough tangle of his wiry red hair, and was excessively dirty. He had been picked up by the police on the road, a common tramp or vagrant, yet he was by no means destitute, for, upon being searched on reception, he was found to be carrying a number of packets of coins, made up into parcels, and secreted in various places under

his clothes. He was generally supposed to be a Russian or a Finn, but nothing about him was ever satisfactorily established, except that he had been in prison before, and liked it, for he gladly welcomed the prison dress, and swallowed the prison allowance greedily, and with manifest relish. Further evidence of his familiarity with prison ways was the readiness with which he found his way to a box on the treadmill, the alacrity with which he climbed into his place, and his obvious acquaintance with the best method of working it so as to minimise the labour.

A very large contingent of foreign Jews found their way into Wormwood Scrubs, committed from the large colony of alien immigrants of the East End. The low quarters of other large cities also supplied their share of the population of the local prisons. They were generally very troublesome prisoners, persistently idle, continually grumbling and dissatisfied, whining for small privileges, and asserting their right to them. They would have their special diets at festival time, would insist on observing their religious forms, they claimed immunity from labour on their Sabbath, and thus escaped with five days' work per week, for we could not well employ them on our Sunday. It is fair to add that they got but little sympathy from their own rabbis, who were on the side of authority, and despised their over-nice sensitiveness in durance, reminding them they were less particular when at large. Other exiles from faraway lands were less punctilious and more amenable; mild Hindoos, sent in for begging, Lascars for offences afloat, Mahommedans of sorts, Egyptians in the conventional fez, Turks from Constantinople, mostly accomplished swindlers these; I found a Jap in Wakefield once who had been an acrobat in a travelling circus, and had defrauded an innkeeper. I met a party of Spanish seamen prisoners in a Welsh gaol, who had been cast away, and were travelling from Cardiff to Liverpool, in hopes of getting a ship. The way was long, and their resources meagre, so they broke the monotony by a burglarious entry into a lonely house, for which they were laid by the heels.

A large number of itinerant musicians and inferior artists



infest the highways and byeways of England, and in some districts, as in Lincolnshire, where the distances between towns are often great, they are moved on with little ceremony or peremptorily arrested. I found that the local magistrates, the rector or vicar, or retired officer, generally made short work of them, and committed them as vagrants to the nearest gaol for a term, after which they were sent beyond the confines of the county. The penalty inflicted upon the organ grinder or bear leader was visited also upon his pets; I have been asked by an Italian, with tears in his eyes, to restore to him his monkey, which, by strict rule, could not be permitted to share his cell, and it was but common kindness not to keep them apart. A more difficult question to settle was that of the custody of the Great Pyrenean dancing bear, which was committed with its owners, two Frenchmen, to Lincoln gaol. The beast had startled the horses of a passing carriage and caused an accident; whereupon the Frenchmen were haled before the Bench and sent straightway to gaol. The Governor refused to receive the bear, which was not mentioned on the warrant of committal, and the party, escorted by the police, and with a long tail of open-mouthed idlers, went back to the Court house. The dilemma was serious, but was solved by imprisoning one bear leader and suffering the other to go at large to look after his animal. The sequel is not the least amusing part of the story. The man who remained free took the first opportunity of absconding with the bear, and the other, who had borne the heat and burden of the day, found when released that he had lost both his partner and his share in the property.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

IDENTIFICATION OF CRIMINALS (*continued*).

The Bertillon System of Measurements in Practice—Sir Francis Galton's Finger-prints Method—French and English Police Compared—M. Macé as Cicerone—M. Gorion and M. Cochefert—Exploring Criminal Paris—The Present Identification System in England—The Way to Treat Hardened Offenders.

I MUST return from this long digression to the more immediate business in hand, the proceedings of our Committee on Identification. The net result of our inquiry was to satisfy us that the existing methods were imperfect, frequently unproductive, and apt to be misleading. The processes pursued were slow and cumbrous; a large number of old offenders managed to conceal their identity, and it was not improbable, although never proved, that their misdeeds might be fathered upon the wrong person, who when arrested and convicted, might, through a mistake, be charged with the sins of another. The system, as we found it, was capable of improvement; more photographs, exacter records more readily available, might further identification. But we were convinced that better and more scientific methods might be pressed into the service. It should be possible, by devising some system of classifying the particulars of the personality of a prisoner, to trace him through them when he is again arrested. The system by which local particulars were taken governed the whole question, and the more simply, and, at the same time, the more unerringly they could be taken, the more satisfactory the result.

We were, as I have said, expressly directed by the terms of our reference, to investigate two new, or, more exactly, newly adopted plans, in furtherance of this end: the



"Bertillon," and the system of finger marks recently developed by Mr. (Sir) Francis Galton, on his own motion, but having its true origin in ancient Indian practice, where from time immemorial, the thumb print was the royal sign manual, and the impression made by it the inalienable record of every individual born into the world. We were called upon to recommend whether one or both of these methods should be introduced into our procedure for identification.

M. Alphonse Bertillon, a French scientific doctor and student of anthropology, has the credit of the discovery\* that the length of certain bony structures in the human body is practically individual and invariable in adults. By measuring these and recording them a mass of particulars were obtained, from which, when ingeniously classified, a person showing the same measurements could be easily and readily identified. The five most important of these measurements, as the basis of the whole system, are the length and width of the head, the length of the left middle finger, the length of the left foot, and the length of the left forearm; they were selected as the most constant in each individual, the most varied in different persons, the least correlated to each other, and the easiest to take accurately. For purposes of identification, three other distinctive particulars are used, namely, the height of the body, the length of the little finger, and the colour of the eye.

It may be interesting to give some account of the process of measurement and identification as carried out at the Prefecture in Paris, where M. Bertillon had an office for the purpose, and to which we paid many visits in our endeavours to master the system. The bureau is, or was at our time, situated upon the top storey, a spacious set of rooms, having rather the look of a laboratory, a lecture room, or scientific *atelier*. Here are collected a dozen or more *détenus*, drawn from the dépôt below, to which are brought every morning the whole of the arrests made in Paris and the Department of the Seine the previous day. Some are only in custody temporarily upon suspicion, some have been taken red-

\* I have been told that the results he first put forward were evolved from the researches of his father, also a well-known medical man.

handed, of many the antecedents are as yet but imperfectly known; but one and all must pass through the hands of M. Bertillon and his myrmidons, who stand around in white blouses, like acolytes or sculptors' workmen. These assistants are selected from the Police de la Sûreté or detective branch, or from prison warders deemed to have particular aptitude for the work, to which they take *con amore*. Even the prisoners play up with a certain alacrity, and seem, as a rule, to be deeply interested in results which may affect them so closely. One by one they step on to the daïs, a sort of studio throne, or wooden platform, on which is fixed the imprint of a foot, and a standard of height, while behind stands the operator with an enormous pair of brass callipers or compasses for the head measurements. A spiral spring has been added to this instrument, which connects the two arms of the callipers, and is intended to equalise the pressure; there is also a handle, a self-registering index, and a small appendage, to be used when the head length is taken, for preventing the left arm of the callipers from slipping into the eye. Great care is insisted upon, naturally, in dealing with these compasses, the scale of which records millimetres or thousandth parts of a metre, and it was impressed upon us, rather amusingly, by an official who talked English "as she is spoke" in France. When he called out "Attention! Do not make him ill," it required some little thought to recognise this as the literal translation of "*Attention! Ne lui faites pas de mal,*" or, as we should say, "Take care you don't hurt him."

So soon as the measurements have been taken, they are inscribed on a card, which is passed to a superior official, who makes the search, and promptly produces another card from the drawer recording the corresponding figures, and, quite possibly, the photograph of the man himself. I was greatly struck by the look of astonishment and surprise of all those subjected to such strange proceedings; still more amusing is the collapse, the absolute surrender, of any "dark horse" who has given a false name, and who is now confronted with full particulars of his identity, supported by his own photograph, as taken when last in the hands of justice.



The work never slackens. As one lot is disposed of, fresh candidates for identification continually arrive from the *depôt* or prison; now and again a *garde de Paris*, one of the soldier-policemen who assist the authorities, brings, under escort, some suspicious person sent straight from the court-house where he has been arraigned, and about whom the judge or magistrate is anxious to know more. I remember now one in particular. A gaudily-dressed, aristocratic-looking man, the perpetrator really of an atrocious murder, was ushered into the crowded room; his attitude was one of fierce protest, his eyes blazed, he would answer no questions, but continually declared himself to be a Moldavian or Wallachian prince, I forget which; he threatened to appeal at once to his Ambassador. There was some little trouble in getting him to submit to the callipers, and but for the imposing force of officials present it was quite likely he would have stoutly resisted and refused to be measured. Never was a man more dumbfounded than he when confronted with the record of his previous history, which clearly showed him as a *cheval de retour*, an old "lag," who had vanished from Paris, but had come back, and had been making a first-class hotel the base of his depredations, ending at last in robbery and murder.

On the whole, however, while expressing our admiration of the Bertillon system, we were not prepared to recommend its adoption in England in its entirety, the more so that we had at command the, to a certain extent, preferable method of "finger prints," as elaborated by Sir Francis Galton, to whose laboratory at South Kensington we paid several visits, studying the process with his instructive assistance.

Sir Francis Galton had first approached the subject from the anthropological point of view and in its bearings on questions of heredity and racial distinctions, but the value of the results he elicited, verifying and endorsing similar experiments made in India, where the peculiarities of the finger print were an accepted tradition, had led to the suggested application of the theory to criminal identification. It had been established beyond all doubt that the impressions or imprints taken from the bulbs immediately below the tips of

the fingers and thumbs are absolutely unchangeable through life, and infinitely varied in form and peculiarity among different individuals. Sir Francis Galton has calculated that the chance of two finger prints being identical is less than one in 64,000 millions; in other words, if the total of the human race be taken at 16,000 millions, the chances are four to one against the print of one finger of any person being exactly like that of any finger of any other person. The prints of one finger, if clearly taken, are therefore enough to decide the question of identity or non-identity, and if the prints of three or more fingers be taken and compared all possibility of error is entirely eliminated. Our Committee was perfectly satisfied that if the finger prints were examined and compared by an expert, they proved a more certain means of identification than any other; quite superior to Bertillonage, or photographs, or even personal recognition.

The basis of these conclusions was the clearly proved fact that the papillary ridges covering the bulbs inside the finger tips form at these points patterns of well marked shape, and most curiously varied. There are three distinct types of these, styled respectively "arches," "loops," and "whorls." At the risk of being too technical, I will quote a passage from the description of these patterns, as given in our report: "In all digits the ridges immediately adjoining the third joint run across the fingers, while those towards the tip follow the form of the nail in a rounded arch, but in the space left at the centre of the bulb the ridges have various curvatures, forming the pattern of the finger print. The pattern is an 'arch' when the ridges in the centre run from one side to the other of the bulb without making any backward turn or twist; a 'loop' when there is a single backward turn but no twist; and a 'whorl' when there is a turn through at least one circle, or a double turn in the form of a duplex spiral." Each pattern has its own symbol; "a" represents the arch; "l" the loop; "w" the whorl; and a formula is constituted from the manner in which these several signs are shown by the fingers, and this formula becomes the personal name of the individual, which can be read through an index



of the finger prints, and must be infallibly right. To go further, and enter upon the minutiae of the differences displayed in the formula, would be confusing to the lay mind, though it presents no difficulty to the trained expert.

For convenience in reading off the formula, imprints are taken of the ten finger tips upon white paper or cardboard, the fingers having been first smeared with printer's ink, and the whole of the ridges, with their junctions, twistings, and terminations can be easily read off by the naked eye, or better, by the use of a lens or magnifying glass, or from an enlarged photograph. Taking the impression is a simple matter; the subject's fingers are first passed lightly over the ink table, then applied with very slight pressure to the sheet on which the record is made.

In the end we recommended that one part, at least, of the two new methods described in the preceding pages should be adopted in this country; that the five principal measurements used in Bertillonage should be taken, as in France, and that the whole of the finger prints should also be taken. But, as some time must elapse before the changes could be in full working order, we suggested that the old methods of identification should be continued. The prisoners should be photographed as heretofore, and their distinctive marks noted, and a descriptive form prepared. The whole of these data were to be inscribed upon one and the same card; measurements, marks, descriptions, finger prints, formula, and photograph, and forwarded for deposit in a new central registry, to be established at Scotland Yard.

I retain many pleasant memories of my visit to Paris to study the Bertillon system. We were, of course, cordially received by our French colleagues, who were most anxious we should see the sights, especially those not open to the ordinary British tourist. We were made free of the Prefecture, and became acquainted with its ways and principal people. The prisons were open to our inspection, and we went the round of the dens and lairs of the submerged section of Parisian criminality, led, as Dante was by Virgil, through the lowest depths, our escort being several well known and distinguished detective police officers.

It is a common belief that they manage these things, police affairs that is to say, better in France, and especially in Paris, than on our side of the Channel. Comparisons are proverbially odious, and I forbear to discuss the respective merits of the two bodies of protective, preventive, and retaliatory police. I can only say that the one respects the other; the French admire the comprehensive and clock-like machinery at the command of the London police; and we admit the more frequent successes achieved by the French police through the greater powers and facilities afforded by the French law to those acting in its name. Man for man, I doubt if there is much to choose between the representatives of the two countries—and I can give my testimony from some acquaintance with both. I have seen the best Frenchmen at their work, and not only on this occasion, but previously, when I had personal experience of their methods in the discharge of their functions.

I had the good fortune to know pretty intimately M. Macé, the well-known Chef de la Sûreté, of whom Gaboriau's "M. le Lecoq" was the prototype, and whom I took the liberty to introduce into one of my stories\* as "M. Flocon," the principal detective officer in that mysterious affair. I was well recommended to M. Macé by my friend Sir Howard Vincent, and was received with the utmost cordiality. M. Macé permitted me to assist at his morning interviews, to attend his parade of subordinates, to accompany him in his visits to the scene of a crime, to enter the prison cell that held some strongly-suspected malefactor, and hear the interrogatory astutely devised to arrive at an admission of guilt. M. Macé was† a small, spare man, of fair complexion and piercing eyes, half veiled by great gold-rimmed spectacles, dressed always, and from the earliest, in the neatest official garb, *la tenue convenable*, a long frock coat, with a white tie, and the red rosette of the Legion d'Honneur. The day began with him early. At 7 a.m. precisely he was at his desk surrounded by his *dossiers*,

\* "The Rome Express." 1895. John Milne.

† He died a year or two ago.



the fat bundles of papers gorged with documents, and scrupulously wrapped up in old copies of the *Figaro* or *Gil Blas*. Here, after reading a voluminous correspondence, letters on all subjects, from all manner of people, giving information, seeking or vouchsafing advice—for there are as many busybodies abroad as at home—he gave audience, to his officers first, to whom he assigned new missions, or from whom he received reports of progress made in those already undertaken; then he admitted members of the general public who were in trouble, had suffered loss, were threatened with blackmail, or over whom some serious charge was impending.

A good deal of private arbitration was transacted in the office of the Chef de la Sûreté. I witnessed many curious instances of this. A mother and her son appeared who had differed over the division of the assets under the sale of a goodwill, their joint property; each accused the other of misappropriating a part of the cash, and, after paying M. Macé several visits, he was at last able to reconcile them without going into court. The preliminaries of inquiry were also conducted by M. Macé. Prisoners taken red-handed were brought before him, as was one, a housebreaker, caught in an apartment. "A thief? What makes you a thief? You are not in want; you are well dressed." The accused, who is in a good suit of black, carries a good hat, hangs his head sheepishly without reply. "Well, tell me, how did you get in? By force?" "Oh, no, monsieur." "With a false key?" "Yes." "What kind? Show me." M. Macé points to a framed photograph of all the known kinds, and the prisoner at once points to the one he used. "Who was with you? No one? Bah, don't tell me. Father alive?" "Yes." "Mother?" "No." "Stepmother?" "Yes." She was outside and was shown in; a very much decorated and overdressed woman, who seems overwhelmed with grief, and begins to upbraid him bitterly, and then turns to the Chef to implore his clemency. The lad was not really bad—"But he has had three previous convictions," interposes the Chef, as he points to the *dossier* of the accused, which has been brought in. "Ah, but, monsieur, think of the shame, the scandal; we shall be overwhelmed with disgrace."

"Very likely; but that is not my affair. I am an official, and have to do with justice, not with your family. Good morning." The accused is marched off to Mazas, and the stepmother is shown the door, but she is stopped by a last word from the Chef. "Now, if I only knew who else was in the robbery——" "I can tell you—a woman, an evil creature, is at the bottom of it all." "Yes? And she lives at——? Her name is——?" "At the Brasserie de—*Madame Chose*—I cannot quite remember, but I will find out and come again. If only I can help the poor lad!" "You may; I shall be glad to see you. Good day."

The lost property office is a distinct and well-managed branch, but valuables picked up or recovered are often brought first to the Chef de la Sûreté. I saw a portfolio brought in which contained 100,000 francs in notes, and which had been dropped by its owner in the street. A French conscript was kicking it along like a football, unconscious of its value. Another curious incident was when three Italian peasants were brought in, who had emigrated and just landed from the United States, and had been the victims of an impudent confidence trick or *vol à l'Américaine*. On the wharf at Havre they had encountered a friendly compatriot, who had recommended them to a particular hotel in Paris, and telegraphed to a confederate to be on the look out for them at the Gare St. Lazare. This second rascal soon ingratiates himself with the new arrivals. They are joined by the other Italian gentleman, who has followed from Havre. In the course of conversation reference is made casually to the leather bag which the returning emigrants carry alternately, and its contents. An American eagle is produced from a great number in the bag, and the talk turns upon exchanges. What are the emigrants going to do with all this gold? Take it home to Domo d'Ossola? Impossible. American gold will not pass there; the money would be useless. It must be exchanged for French gold here, in Paris. The simpletons swallow this fiction, and are quite grateful to their new friends, who offer to find some one to carry out the exchange. One goes out, and presently returns with a third friend. The newcomer



has also a bag stuffed with notes, French bank notes, which he offers for the gold. But here our emigrants' first advisers interpose. The exchange must be gold for gold, not gold for notes. "*Parfaitement*," says the exchange agent, "I will get you gold for your gold. Give it me, and I will leave my notes"—the last comer's bag is opened and the bundles of notes disclosed to view—"as security in your hands till I return." The advisers think this an admirable arrangement, so do the emigrants, who are enchanted when their friends promise to accompany the exchange agent and see fair play. The three disappear with the gold, leaving the dupes staring contentedly at the bag in pawn.

A long pause ensues, and the befooled Italians are beginning to feel uncomfortable, when the police, who have been quietly watching the proceedings, intervene. They have already captured the swindlers and the bag with the gold, and now they take charge of the victims, carrying the whole lot in custody to the Prefecture, where they are soon ushered into the presence of M. Macé. His unerring memory serves him in good stead, and he promptly recognises the prime mover as a cosmopolitan trickster, who has been twice sentenced for the same offence. The next step is to remove the culprits to Mazas, and their would-be victims are advised to leave Paris and go home forthwith. "But our gold?" It has been poured out on the table, and forms a splendid heap of the finest coins in the world. "I'll lock it up for you," says the obliging M. Macé, "or, better still, it shall be transmitted to the authorities of your own town, Domo d'Ossola, to be handed over on your arrival." This judicious disposal of their hard-won savings was, I could see, not entirely satisfactory.

After breakfast that day, M. Macé permitted me to accompany him to Mazas, at that time the great House of Detention for Paris, now improved off the face of the city, and replaced by the fine prison recently erected at Fresnes outside Paris, a very perfectly constructed and equipped establishment. Old Mazas was a massive, gloomy building, the cells roomy enough, but dark, silent, and tomblike. We

enter one of them, three of us, and bow civilly to its occupant, who makes us hospitably welcome. He is a man accused of murder under peculiarly atrocious circumstances, the murder of a lonely old woman, supposed to have much secreted wealth, whom he is said to have strangled with his hands; great, powerful, hairy fists, in keeping with his muscular frame, for he is tall and solid, with a gigantic head, covered with a great shock of coarse, unkempt black hair.

Chairs were brought, one for the Chef, another for me, a third for the confidential agent who is with M. Macé, a fourth for the prisoner, who is invited to sit down. A cigar case is produced and handed round, then we all settle down, as it might be to a friendly smoke and chat. The conversation is at first quite general and *banal*, but soon takes a business turn. There are points to be cleared up in the case, which rests on circumstantial evidence. Strong suspicion attaches to the accused, but there is no positive proof of the crime. I was greatly struck by the plan pursued—a few direct questions were asked, but the answers were vague, and did not advance matters. Then the agent, a large, fat man, with a good-natured but cunning face, proceeded with all the art of an accomplished actor to play the piece—to give a representation of the actual crime. First the old woman, huddled up in a corner, inert and unsuspecting; next the miscreant creeping in and approaching her with cautious, silent footsteps, a long, fateful pause, and then, with a tiger-like spring, he fastens on his prey, and with convulsive energy wrings her neck. It was acted to the life, a really fine performance, and when it was over the agent turned to the prisoner, who had been watching every movement with suppressed excitement, and said simply: "That was how you did it, eh?" The answer surprised out of him is almost a confession. "No, not quite like that," and he shuts his lips with a gesture of deprecation.

M. Macé took me everywhere; all doors flew open to him at the mere mention of his name and functions, he had the *entrée* everywhere. A good box at the Folies Bergères, or the best seats at the Moulin Rouge; it would have been the same at the Théâtre Français or the Opéra had I expressed



the wish. He had been at one time the Commissary charged with the surveillance of theatres, and was much esteemed by managers and directors. He took me to the Barrier balls, and to the night haunts of thieves and desperadoes, in quarters once the most aristocratic—royal palaces like that of La Reine Blanche, streets famous for their religious houses, like that of the Filles de Dieu. M. Macé knew his Paris by heart; he had lived his life there, rising through all the police grades, surviving the political and revolutionary storms, serving under the Second Empire, lodged in Mazas by the Commune, and narrowly escaping with his life, so likely to be threatened in the case of a public official obnoxious to so many Communards. When I knew him he was counting the days to his well-earned retirement on pension, and the cultivation of his literary tastes. The many excellent books he subsequently brought out are well known. "Mon Premier Crime" was a story of successful detection, and far superior, from its striking realism, to any fiction of the most gifted romancists, such as Gaboriau, Boisgobey, Chavette, and the rest. It was based on personal experiences, as were his other fascinating works, such as "Mes Lundis en Prison."

When our Committee visited Paris, M. Gorion was the Chef de la Sûreté, and we had much reason to be grateful to him for his courtesy and kindness. He was a man of the world, who knew men and cities, and he had also literary tastes, evidenced by his Memoirs, which compare well with those of his well-known predecessors, Canler and Vidocq. I have the honour to number among my acquaintances the present holder of the office, M. Cochefert, who came to London some years ago, and spent a week or two with us in seeing the sights—the prisons, police stations, and haunts of vice. A quiet, self-contained, rather homely person, who impressed one with a sense of self-reliance and force.

One of the civilities shown us at the Prefecture was to provide us with an escort and cicerone in the person of an Inspecteur de la Sûreté, for whom we conceived a great liking. M. Gorion was our constant attendant wherever we went by day or night, a well-mannered, unassuming, and

most obliging companion, who escorted us here, there, and everywhere; to the Bertillon bureau daily, to the prisons we desired to inspect, Mazas, La Santé, where cellular separation was now strictly enforced, La Roquette, the depôt for convicts bound for New Caledonia, and for that longer journey from which there is no return; for, when capital punishment is inflicted in Paris, the guillotine is built up on the square of La Roquette. St. Lazare also, the great prison for female offenders of all categories and ages, vicious and neglected children, and the large contingent provided by the Police des Mœurs, under the paternal regulations that obtain for the supervision and correction of *dames galantes*.

I travelled over much the same ground as when I accompanied M. Macé ten or fifteen years previously, and noticed a marked improvement. Some of the lowest quarters were greatly reduced in size or had been quite swept away. But the Café of the Pères Lunettes was still to be found in the Rue des Anglais, formerly Rue des Crimes, with its decorations, its portraits of local celebrities, and its frescoes of criminal events—assaults, pursuits, captures. Artists came forward to amuse us, the same violinist, from whom one of the Parisian street minstrels, familiar on our music hall stage, had made himself up exactly, in long, frayed frock coat and rusty tall hat, and with a ragged, weedy beard. Another survival was the artist who took portraits in chalks, and did us all.\* The place, sordid and shabby, had become rather a sham, kept up as a sort of show for the curious sightseer who had read strange stories of strange doings when royal princes came incognito to penetrate the noisome arcana of crime, and witness the rough horseplay and quarrels of criminals in their most secret haunts.

We passed on to scenes more vivid and more real; the actual night lairs and sleeping places of the dregs of Parisian life. I saw again the palace of La Reine Blanche, of which I have spoken, with its grand staircase and lofty rooms,

\* My friend Mr. Macnaghten, now the Assistant-Commissioner of Police, and head of the Criminal Investigation Department, has them hanging framed in his private office at New Scotland Yard.



now a very *bouge*, a deep, dark cavern, crammed with ragged wretches and reeking with fetid odours of foul humanity. We are taken upstairs to a private room, where a brute lost to all sense of decency exhibits, for a few sous, his body covered entirely with tattoo marks, and thence, by the light of a farthing dip, to the bedrooms, the dog kennels rather, dens far worse than any doss house in White-chapel or Seven Dials. The wooden beds were like packing cases, each with a little black straw in the bottom, and a foul, black blanket, and its occupant for the most part stark naked, for the heat is almost as intolerable as the smell. "Would you like to carry off one of these beds as a memento?" asked our conductor. "Memento!" growled a voice, "take also some fleas, and you will be conferring a favour, or the *punaises*, which horribly torment us."

We visited another popular night haunt—"Fradin's"—in a street leading from the Pont Neuf, a tall, narrow house of five storeys, every floor of which, and the cellars in the basement below, are packed tight with sleepers in uncomfortable attitudes and in their clothes, for this is technically only a place of call or passage, and every soul is hunted out at daylight. It is a huge dormitory notwithstanding, and the weary lodgers sleep as they can; the most fortunate are those who have secured a seat at a table on which they can rest their elbows and lay their heads on their hands. Others find it a boon to sleep on the stairs, extending their bodies full length on the slope, although constantly disturbed by the passers up and down. I walked upon one quite by accident, and only met the patient rebuke, "*Ce n'est pas poli de fouler les gens sous pied.*" In winter time the cellars are most popular, in summer the garrets. House room costs four sous, but it is not the only luxury afforded, another penny, or two sous, buys a bowl of thick, steaming cabbage soup, and for the same price a tumbler of red, or rather, black wine can be had. It was not a very ruinous extravagance to offer all the inmates on the night of our visit soup and a glass all round, and we left them for the moment warmed and comforted, but within an hour they were certain to be driven forth into the streets or on to the Bois de

Boulogne. Already, indeed, the detectives were gathered outside to follow them and watch their movements, for the most part unavowable and against the law.

Since the first action taken pursuant to our report on the identification of criminals, great improvements have been introduced into the methods in force. A second Committee was appointed in 1900 to deal with the subject, and it recommended the complete abandonment of the Bertillon system, which had not answered in this country, and the substitution of the "finger prints," as quite the most workable and, at the same time, a most absolutely infallible principle of identification. As I write these lines the unfortunate affair of Mr. Adolf Beck is greatly exercising the mind of the public, and it may be unhesitatingly asserted that the grave error perpetrated in his case would have been impossible had there been finger print records of his so-called double in existence.

With the advent of Mr. Henry at Scotland Yard,\* a great impetus was given to the system. As Inspector-General of Police in Bengal he had realised its complete success, and he has since, with the concurrence of the Home Office and the able assistance of Mr. Leslie Macnaghten, the chief of the Criminal Investigation Department, my colleague on the first inquiry, adopted and enlarged its processes. To amass a large quantity of data, embracing the greatest possible number of the habitual criminals, has been the unceasing effort of the Convict Supervision Office at New Scotland Yard. This is the central dépôt where all finger prints, from all parts of the country, are registered, under a system of simple but effective indexing, so that subsequent searches and verifications are made easy.

The value of the present system lies in its almost universal applicability. All persons who come within the grip of the law, charged with certain offences, and sentenced to not less than one month's imprisonment, are "finger printed" by the warders of the gaol at which they are received, and the record—a mere slip—is forwarded to

\* First as Assistant-Commissioner, to be presently advanced to Chief Commissioner of Metropolitan Police.



New Scotland Yard. The offences are some twenty-six in number, and include the most heinous, such as forgery, embezzlement, burglary, and felonies of all kinds, and many of the lesser crimes, so that pretty well the whole army of crime is now catalogued in the police archives. As compared with the number of identifications made by anthropometry (Bertillonage), those by finger prints are very much larger. In the year 1901 there were 410 by the first named; in 1902, by the second, 1,722, with 3,042 in the next year, and 2,335 in the first half of 1904. There were also some remarkable instances of detection by the impressions unconsciously left by depredators in the act of committing crime—finger marks left on glass or fresh paint—which were photographed, and the formula they connoted compared with the records at the central office. There have been several authentic cases of conviction on this evidence, which fully satisfied both judge and jury.

Of late it has been the rule to take the finger prints of all persons arrested at race meetings and public gatherings. Reference made in the usual way to the register has resulted in the discovery of identity and antecedents, so that when these men were arraigned next morning the Court knew all their previous history. The increasing usefulness of the register is shown by its rapid growth. There are already (July, 1904) 70,000 slips on record, and the weekly additions run to some 350 slips. One of the manifest advantages of the new system is the saving of time in securing recognitions. I have referred on a previous page to the labour entailed by the visits of so many officers so frequently to Holloway, and the abolition of this practice has been equal to the addition of eight or ten police officers to the staff in the year. As many more have become available by avoiding the long searches through the photographic albums at Scotland Yard, where upwards of 300 officers were in the habit of attending monthly for the greater part of every day.

The registration of habitual criminals is an appreciable step towards that more intelligent treatment of recidivism that has been much advocated by the advanced school of criminologists, and is practically accepted by us in principle,

although Parliamentary warfare still postpones the necessary legislation on the subject. It has ever been a matter of deep and abiding interest to me, for I may claim to have been one of the first, if not the very first, to have advocated the "indefinite" or indeterminate sentence for habitual criminals.

In the spring of 1878, long before Sir Robert Anderson took up the cause and ventilated it in his admirable and well-reasoned articles in the *Nineteenth Century*, I expressed these views to the Royal Commission, presided over by Lord Kimberley, for inquiring into the best methods of inflicting penal servitude. I am afraid I was not in very close sympathy with the Commissioners on some points, more particularly with regard to separate confinement, to which they still clung rather tenaciously, and which, even then, I stoutly condemned.

The question was put to me whether I thought the advantage of recouping outlay in the maintenance of convicts should be allowed to weigh against the effectiveness of punishment as a deterrent from crime, and I rather shocked my hearers by altogether denying the value of punishment as a deterrent in the case of hardened offenders. Repeated convictions and sentences have no effect in preventing them from again committing themselves when once more at large, and from this I deduced the conclusion that they should be kept as long as possible out of harm's way, and that in the extreme case I was in favour of something akin to the perpetual imprisonment of habitual criminals—very much the position at which we have arrived to-day. My opinion, which was put forward in all seriousness, was not so received by the Commission. I am wondering whether the survivors will look with equal ridicule upon the projected Bill for the enactment of some form of indeterminate sentence. But on this question I shall have more to say in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER XXV.

## A CONGRESS OF CRIMINAL ANTHROPOLOGY.

Criminologists at Geneva—Professor Lombroso and His Views on Criminology—  
 Enrico Ferri—Other Criminologists—The Author's Paper on the Treatment of  
 Habitual Criminals—Indefinite Detention—The Question Discussed—Prisoners  
 who do not Desire Freedom—The Cost of Indefinite Detention—Failure of the  
 Present System.

I SPOKE in the last chapter of the first suggestion made by me for the lengthened and practically indefinite detention of habitual criminals. This, as I have said, was in 1878, when I was a witness before Lord Kimberley's Royal Commission upon penal servitude. It was my good fortune eighteen years later to have an opportunity of raising the question before a great gathering of eminent persons interested in criminals and the treatment of crime. In 1896 I had the honour to be appointed to represent England at the Congress of Criminal Anthropology assembled at Geneva. The chief topics for discussion were the comparatively new theories put forward by the Italian school founded by Professor Lombroso, who was to be present at the congress. The central idea of the new philosophy was the existence of a human type, the "born criminal," of a luckless being predestined and condemned to crime by the physical traits born in him, and from which he could hardly hope to escape in after life. I shall have more to say on this profoundly interesting, but yet amazing, pretension of the advanced section of criminologists; but I will give, first, some account of the gathering, and sketch some of the principal figures, many of them men of European fame, with whom it was an honour to be associated.

I shall never forget the impression made on me when I first met my new colleagues upon the steps of the Geneva University one fine morning in August. It was a very notice-

able crowd of people (men mostly, although there were a few ladies among them, and one or two in smart costumes), men of marked individuality, men out of the ordinary, of an unconventional class, and varying from each other in dress, and form, and feature. Some were in evening dress, although it was 9 a.m., this being the official *tenue* of functionaries abroad anxious to do honour to the occasion. One man was in a frock coat and tall hat, the English idea of correct full dress in the day time, even under the hottest sun. But the rest, for the most part, cared little for personal appearance, and were clearly above and independent of it. Here were light suits and dark suits, and travelling suits of various cut and fashion; tall hats, straw hats, and crush hats, bowler hats of all curious shapes that betrayed to the shrewd observer many distinct nationalities; ties, too, that were made in many different countries, from the cosmopolitan white choker to the fine double bow of the Frenchman, and the English plain scarf and gold pin. But the faces and figures, even at the first cursory glance, fixed attention, and the people themselves were obviously more interesting than their clothes. They were, for the most part, men of high intelligence, some of them, indeed, of great intellectual gifts: grave philosophers, with broad, placid brows and deep-set, thoughtful eyes; quick-witted, vivacious controversialists, with mobile features and fiery eyes; legists, scientists, doctors of medicine and doctors of law, professors of every branch of learning. All those previously acquainted, as well as those now for the first time formally presented to each other, were eagerly talking together as they pace the wide corridors waiting for the opening of the *séance*. The words and phrases that fall from their lips were not always readily comprehensible to the exoteric mind. Such expressions as "morphologique," "pyschiatric," "brachycephalic and microcephalic," "amnesia," "osmometer," "cerebral anomalies and circumvolution," were a little obscure and confusing. But again and again, amid this scientific jargon, the same voices were heard, "Lombroso? Is he here? Will he come?" and the answers were nearly always, "Yes, surely, he has his revenge to make after Brussels."



Lombroso, the learned doctor of Turin, the daring innovator and creator of a new science built upon his own indefatigable researches, was in truth the central figure of the great gathering. But for him there would be no Congress of Criminal Anthropology, no such science as the Natural History of Criminals. He is the father of it all, the *cher maître* to the active band of disciples and pupils who have gathered round him, subscribing unhesitatingly to his views, ready to go forth, like their master, in their defence. When, later in the day's proceedings, Lombroso himself, summoned by universal acclaim, ascends the tribune, all eyes are turned upon him, especially those who see him for the first time.

What manner of man is this Italian savant, whose name has become famous, world renowned, within a few short years; whose discoveries, speculations, conclusions—call them what we will—have been as widely discussed as a new religion or the Eastern Question? He comes forward slowly, deprecatingly, reluctant to accept the honour done him, protesting that he has nothing new to say, that he is fresh from home, and has not yet recovered fluency in French, the language of the Congress. He is short in stature, but with much distinction of bearing, modest and unpretentious in manner, yet with the obvious self-reliance of one firm in his convictions. We accept at once the kindly verdict, "What a dear old man!" uttered by someone near; old, because incessant study has given a stoop to his shoulders, but still hale and hearty in the vigour of his age. He has a mild, attractive face; round, apple cheeks, as chubby as a child's; still, quiet eyes behind his spectacles—eyes that will flash brilliantly as he warms in the fight for his principles; his voice is soft, persuasive, almost apologetic, until he is roused by hostility or the forcible impulsion of "fixed ideas," which must find outlet in a torrent of fiery words. He speaks first of all in a personal sense, conversing, as it were, with his audience, telling them of the latest addition to his discoveries. It is only when he has been excited by opposition that he waxes loud in the defence of his views. "They say I am dead and buried. Do I look

like it?" he cried. "They say that the edifice I have built up is tottering to its fall. I admit nothing of the kind. I am raising it higher and higher, daily adding stone to stone. At least, I myself believe in my own theories, and care not one jot what others say."

If he had foes, scientific, not personal, be it understood, for the bitterest opponent could not but be drawn towards the kindly and keen old man, he had a phalanx of friends, a bodyguard as ready as any Irishmen at Donnybrook to take up the cudgels in his defence. Now and again an interruption comes; a hard-hearted German doctor with blue spectacles refuses his assent to conclusions drawn from insufficient premises. This is Dr. Noecke, of Hubertsberg Asylum, near Leipzig, one of the most eminent of the foreign alienists. The Belgian professor, Dr. d'Allemagne, with great nicety of touch, analyses and dissects arguments till they seem to lose all their vitality. The hardest hitter is a Russian senator, M. Zakrewsky, whose chief weapon is ridicule, and, beyond doubt, it wounds shrewdly. He will see no good thing in criminal anthropology. "In what has it benefited us? In nothing. The world goes on the same, everything is unchanged. It may some day, perhaps, be useful as an auxiliary to justice. At present it has no more to do with the rights of men than the movements of the heavenly bodies."

Lombroso's too combative and somewhat too valorous supporter joins issue at once. "Je demande la parole!" rang out like a pistol shot, and is followed by the prompt appearance of, perhaps, the most remarkable man present, except Lombroso. A thrill ran through the audience at the sight of this (to many) well-known face and figure. It was Enrico Ferri, one of the most prominent of the younger public men of Italy; greatly gifted by nature—tall, of commanding presence, his fine head surmounted by thickly clustering black curls, in strong contrast to his pale blue eyes. His voice is sonorous and untiring, his flow of words extraordinary, his eloquence at times electrifying. No one could well listen to Ferri unmoved; not the law pupils whom he instructs from his professorial





covered the stigmata of born criminals in the children of drunkards. Besides these, there was Dr. Betcherewf, of St. Petersburg, a frequent speaker, but mostly on questions of responsibility and moral sanity. There remained the generally silent members, the large majority perhaps, but if they avoided the tribune they helped to form the public opinion—an important function, in view of the comprehensiveness of this Congress. These included the inevitable Japanese, deeply attentive throughout, a Brazilian, of unmistakably Portuguese descent, a Russian student, a Nihilist, in a blue blouse, with an impenetrable tangle of bushy hair, and myself. I tried to give a new turn to the proceedings towards their close by submitting a paper on the practical treatment of habitual criminals, a subject accepted by many present as a welcome relief after the exhaustion of more abstract and rather threadbare themes.

I pointed out that habitual crime was unaffected by existing methods of repression, and quoted figures from English sources showing the extraordinary number of reconvictions that constantly occur, and for all manner of crimes, statistics that have their counterpart abroad. These habitual criminals, as I said, constitute the essence of the criminality of a country, the outlaws, overt and undisguised, against society; those, in fact, who persistently defy the law, and refuse to abide by the rules and regulations that society makes, and which are respected by honest people. They are incorrigible, for the time being at least. As we see daily, they resist all present penal treatment; no sooner is their punishment ended than they almost inevitably return to crime. The question is, have such avowed evil-doers any right to be set at large? Is not society, against which they wage such ceaseless warfare, entitled to keep them when it has caught them? To hold them, and prevent them from carrying on their nefarious practices, which they will almost surely resume when set free, and continue until they are once more (but not immediately or inevitably) recaptured, and again brought under process of law? Surely this is the logical conclusion.

If (I went on) this proposition be conceded, we arrive at

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indefinite detention in some form or other as the only feasible and effective treatment of habitual crime. No doubt it is easier to grant the proposition than to concert measures for giving practical effect to it. At the very outset it must be admitted that any system of indefinite detention based upon "the indeterminate sentence," as it has been called in penal science, bristles with difficulties. Many serious questions arise, many grave objections can be urged against its introduction, all tending to impede, perhaps prevent, the necessary legislation. The first is the novelty of the method, and its almost certain unpopularity until it, and the reasons for it, are more fully understood. It might be condemned at first sight as cruel. The more or less absolute loss of liberty must seem, on the face of it, too heavy a penalty to impose. The public mind would see only the prison as at present administered, a system of punishment viewed by many with a certain (although not well-founded) distrust. Public opinion, it may be urged, would never consent to the application of such a system indefinitely. "Yes," it may be answered, "but would such objection hold against a milder system and for terms only *relatively* indefinite?" For no one could advocate the existing methods of repression and prison discipline for indefinite terms. Still less would it be right to withhold all hope of freedom from those subjected to the indeterminate sentence. Ultimate conditional release should be held up to all as a boon to be gained by reasonable presumption afforded that a cure had been effected, and the "habit" of crime overcome. This brings us to another, and, perhaps, the most serious difficulty in the whole question. The reluctance of the public, of the legal and official mind, to accept the principle might be, and is, no doubt, being overcome; such relaxations of prison discipline might be contrived as would render lengthy detention less irksome. But how, or by whom, in what way, and by what agency, is the case of each individual detained to be considered and his sentence determined? This, as I concluded, was perhaps the chief and greatest of all the difficulties that militate against the proposal. Yet even this is not insuperable, and might yield before cautious, practical, experiment.

My paper was fully discussed at the Congress, and evoked some very interesting remarks. Among the speakers were some of the ablest members of the Congress, to wit, MM. Lombroso, Van Hamel, Ferri, Albert Rivière, Cornavin, and Gauthier, the two last eminent Swiss jurists, who have quite recently been engaged in deliberations on this very question—with the result, indeed, that a sentence, nominally limited to ten or twenty years, but in principle indeterminate, has been added to the Swiss penal code.

First, M. Van Hamel, the eminent publicist of Amsterdam, touched on the sentimental objections, which he freely admitted prevailed, and very generally. The very name of the indeterminate sentence was dreaded, he said, but only because its real import (leaving on one side its necessity) was not appreciated. Yet it meant nothing more than a break with custom, and the substitution of a newer and more effective process under sufficient safeguards. He advocated the system unhesitatingly, because he believed it would have a far more deterrent effect upon the habitual offender himself, who, when (as now) sentenced to a fixed term braced himself up to endure it, to pay the penalty of detection, but with the full intention of returning to his evil courses when the debt was cleared and the offence purged. But "let him know," argued Van Hamel, "that when he is caught he goes to prison to stay there, not for six months, or six years, but until the authorities believe they have weaned him from his habits of crime. Let him understand this, and that as a 'recidivist,' one who will not abide by social laws, he has forfeited his right to be at large, and you give him a sounder, clearer, view of what his lapses mean, and what society's attitude towards him is, than has been effected by any of the penal methods hitherto tried."

Leaving on one side for a moment the special character of the places of indefinite detention, we come to the question of how and when release would be granted, for it must be remembered that, although the new form of penalty is indeterminate, it is not intended to be endless, and detention should cease after certain guarantees of improvement have been given. Van Hamel recommended the creation of a



board of commission, sitting at regular intervals at the place of detention, and inquiring carefully into each individual case on its merits, upon reports made and advice given by the prison officials. M. Gauthier, professor of law at Geneva, who was distinctly opposed to the whole system as, "however fascinating in theory, still pure theory, and nothing more," foresaw great difficulties in the action of this committee of release. He admitted that the question of ultimate release was the essence of the system, but he could not see how the committee could ever come to a decision. An immense responsibility would rest upon them; by what evidence, what information, how and where obtained, would they be guided? If the numbers under detention were large, no governor or chaplain could advise with certainty upon the whole of the individuals in custody. M. Ferri, speaking in the same connexion, was not in favour of any commission, and recommended the appointment of a single high functionary or public official, who would be charged with the observation of all prisoners of this class; it would be his duty "to superintend the moral change in each," as M. Ferri put it, "and he would in due course bring forward cases in which sufficient improvement was visible or might be fairly assumed."

Coming next to the most suitable places for carrying out the indeterminate sentence, I pointed out that it would be necessary to make some classification of the persons to be subject to it, at least to the extent of resolving convicted persons into the two grand divisions that include all manner of offences against the law.

There is first the crime that is casual, occasional, and comparatively unimportant; and secondly, the crime that is serious (a) through the gravity of the offence, or (b) through its being chronic and habitual.

The treatment of offenders in the first category calls for no special remark, and can be dealt with by the existing methods of imprisonment. The same may be said of Class II. (a), who would be consigned as at present to local or convict prisons, according to the view taken by the tribunals before whom they were tried.

But with Class II. (b) we are brought face to face with the habitual criminal, the offender for whom especially this new method of penal treatment is proposed. Here again there are gradations to be counted with; there must be a distinction between the less heinous offenders, who are yet persistent, and the really serious, who are also habitual. For both classes the system of indefinite detention seems prescribed, but not in the same establishment, nor yet under the same *régime*. The first class would consist mainly of the vagrants, vagabonds, drunkards, the poor, weak-kneed creatures who have not the strength to run straight, even if they were willing to do so, and who wander all over the country, more or less, visiting and revisiting for a brief term almost every one of His Majesty's prisons. With these would be classed imbecile and weak-minded offenders. There are surely no great administrative difficulties in the way of creating a labour settlement on the Dutch plan, a workhouse, in fact, on a more extensive scale, but with the obligation to work that is imposed nowadays upon able-bodied paupers, and with opportunities of self-improvement and possible social recovery. A first experiment might be made with such an establishment as an annexe to any prison that has space greatly in excess of demands, and ground within and beyond the walls available for the open-air employments that seem most suitable for the inmates of such a place.

Finally, for the principal and gravest category, the habitual criminal, whose repeated offences are aimed against and do manifest injury to society, and for whom I contend that the only salutary and effective treatment is the indeterminate sentence, what manner of place of durance can be devised? It is clear that imprisonment, as we understand and practise it, would not be possible; it probably would not be tolerated by public opinion, always, and just now more than usually, distrustful of our penal methods. Neither the strict separation of the local prison, nor the progressive treatment of the convict prison, would be applicable, or indeed advisable. In a place of indefinite detention many of the received notions on prison discipline must go by the board; many



restrictions must be removed, many relaxations permitted. Labour would be imposed, of course, but it would be task work, in association, with no strict rule of silence, and the employments chosen should be as little irksome and repulsive as possible; trades and handicrafts, industrial occupations, the cultivation of field and garden, the raising and care of stock—in a word, Dartmoor, but in a better climate, under pleasanter conditions, and, so far as the farming operations are concerned, with a more generous and fruitful soil. The prison buildings need not be elaborate or expensive—one range of simple cells of corrugated iron, on the plan of the first temporary prison at Wormwood Scrubs. Separation would be the rule at night, but meals might be taken in common, probably on the works. A sufficient dietary would be, of course, imperative. For healthful recreations, an ample supply of good current literature, lectures, concerts, entertainments, when such boons and privileges had been earned by continuous good conduct. The problem of relaxation sufficiently amusing, yet not carried too far, could only be solved after careful experiment, and there seems no good reason why a system of giving "passes," or permits to go at large for short periods on leave of absence, should not be tried, in the way known to Irish intermediate prisons, but going somewhat further as regards time and distance.

Suggestions of this kind may seem so revolutionary, the whole scheme so Utopian and far-fetched, as to be impracticable of adoption. This was the view taken by my chiefs when I made my report upon the Congress to the Home Secretary. For my own part, drawing upon my own knowledge and experience, I have never seen any insuperable difficulties in the way. The worst objections have been a certain amount of popular prejudice, and the vague apprehensions of uninformed and unprogressive minds, but these are fast disappearing. It may be urged that the concentration in one spot of a mass of the worst characters, people from whom the certain hope of release was withdrawn, might be dangerous; such men, yielding to despondency, might grow desperate, and pass easily into mutiny and violence. But it must be remembered that under this

system release is not absolutely barred. Again, it is a fact well known to all practised prison officials, that habitual criminals, the worst as regards offences, are nevertheless the most tractable, and generally the best-conducted, members of the prison population. With many of them, indeed, imprisonment has become second nature; thralldom is their normal condition, liberty only a short and occasional interlude. The habitual criminal, in fact, by his repeated return to gaol, voluntarily places himself in the very position that indefinite detention implies.

Nor must it be forgotten that there really exists a certain and fairly numerous contingent of the constant inmates of prisons who would be content to stay there of their own accord. This is really no exaggeration. Not only have I often met with prisoners who have asked in all seriousness not to be set free, but it is of daily occurrence that, when released, as is inevitable, they proceed at once to the commission of some offence, trifling or foolish in itself, which will gain for them the coveted boon of re-imprisonment. Old officers of convict prisons bear testimony to the fact that many convicts do not value "remission," and will misconduct themselves on purpose to forfeit it, and remain as long as possible in confinement. This strange fact is not limited to English experience. Signor Ferri instanced cases within his own knowledge where Italian convicts begged and petitioned against pardon and release. Emile Gauthier, a French writer (once a prisoner), tells a curious story of an old convict who had found a comfortable billet as hospital assistant, and who, being obliged to surrender it on release, wrote asking the Governor of Clairvaux Prison to keep it open for him, as he meant, when free, to qualify at once for a fresh sentence of imprisonment.

I cannot see the force of any objections based on the fear of outbreak and disturbance, provided always that due precautions are taken, and sufficient safeguards exist. There must be discipline, of course, a system of unremitting watchfulness and observation of the demeanour of the prisoners; a bad spirit existent, or on the increase, invariably betrays itself to the practised eye, and to render this watchfulness



effective, the numbers to be located in each one of these establishments should never be large, at most, say, 200 or 300. Good discipline, and the uniform submissiveness that would be essential, could be secured by making immediate removal to a prison of the old and strict kind the penalty for all misconduct. The comparatively near neighbourhood of such a prison would be a *sine quâ non* in the system of indefinite detention. Again, the rules in force at all prisons prohibiting the free use of tools, knives, weapons, and so forth, would be necessary in the place of detention; also the regular searchings on going to and from labour, and of the prison cells and buildings. Supervision, too, would also be necessary, constant rounds and visits to working parties, although these last need not be always under the personal control of an officer; it might be sufficient to appoint a well-conducted and skilled prisoner as "ganger" or head man, to receive orders as to the task, and exercise a certain authority over his fellows. Safe custody would have to be closely considered, and this might be sufficiently guaranteed by a cordon of posts drawn around the outermost frontiers of the establishment.

The costliness of the system now propounded will, no doubt, be advanced against it. To retain large numbers in custody at the charge of the State, who would, under present arrangements, go free and fend for themselves, must naturally bear heavily upon the Exchequer. But, if this increased burthen be dissected, it will be found to be only a change in the incidence of expense. If there were a direct addition to estimates, there would be an indirect, and assuredly very substantial, saving, in the reduced amount of damage done by depredators otherwise at large, and further in the reduced expenditure on account of legal processes and the whole paraphernalia of justice. Moreover, these places of indefinite detention should be administered on such sound economic principles as to be as nearly as possible self-supporting. They should be institutions both agricultural and industrial; the daily food should be raised upon the prison lands, the clothing should be woven and made up in the prison workshops, all repairs, every article necessary for

consumption and use, should be made upon the premises. These are points too technical to refer to more in detail, but if the general principle were inculcated that the institution should be as far as possible self-contained and sufficient for its own needs, the question of cost would be considerably simplified.

Last of all, it may be objected that our existing system of conditional liberation is a more natural and practical method of treatment, less onerous to the State, more conducive to the permanent recovery and rehabilitation of the individual. But is our police supervision over licence holders effective? Does it control and keep its hand upon all, or any very large number, of them? The answer must be in the negative to both these questions. That supervision does not deter or protect society from crime, is shown by the number of serious crimes committed by licence holders, who are not known to be such at the time of arrest, or even some time afterwards. When a crime has been committed whereof the perpetrator remains unknown, the police may beat up the quarters of such licence holders as are within their grasp, but this seldom means more than that they render life difficult, perhaps intolerable, to these old offenders, without fixing the new crime upon any one of them.

But the strongest argument against the efficacy of police supervision as a shield and protection to the public is that its action is exceedingly circumscribed. It is applied only to those habitual offenders who continually pass in and out of the local prisons, many of them great criminals too, for since the craze for inflicting the lightest possible penalties, numbers of old convicts, after enduring several terms of penal servitude, are now sentenced only to short imprisonments. Such men as Milsom and Fowler, the Muswell Hill murderers, are frequently inmates of local gaols, and afterwards are set at large without any supervision at all. Surely there is in all this much to recommend the adoption of a system of conditional detention, the substitution of detention prolonged indefinitely, yet only nominally so, for our present ineffective methods, especially that of conditional liberation.



Having reached this, the latest stage of prison development, it may be well to make a brief retrospective survey of imprisonment and its effects. The deprivation of personal liberty has long been accepted by all civilised nations as the best, if not the only possible method of dealing with offences against the law. The objects sought have varied with the views that were in the ascendant for the time being. It has been often believed that the period of detention might be so utilised that the subject might be reformed and regenerated, and so cured of his evil promptings that when again at large he will sin no more. This theory has been pushed to its utmost limits. We have seen how elaborate was the experiment made in the old Millbank Penitentiary. It is again on trial on still larger and more costly lines at Elmira, a modern American institution. The failure at Millbank was very strongly marked; at Elmira the results are very problematical, and such as they are they have been achieved with manifest injustice to the law abiding citizens, who have missed a State help accorded to their erring brethren. There are still many sanguine people who believe in the powers of persuasion, and who constantly advocate systematic endeavours to change the very nature of the morally weak or depraved. I may be called hard-hearted if I point out that all my experience points to the utter futility of these processes, and state my deliberate conviction that to search for reformation by such means is to follow a mere will-o'-the-wisp, which has constantly evaded and bewrayed its well-intentioned followers.

With regard to deterrence, the physical discomforts of duration are relied upon to discourage those who have experienced them from making a second trial, and, indirectly, to warn the still innocent of what they may expect if they go wrong. In neither case can we point to any great effect achieved. Recidivism, repeated re-convictions, show what habitual criminals think of imprisonment, and the example made of them is too remote to deter the evilly disposed from wrong-doing. This is the best answer to all who advocate severity in prison rules, the imposition of the most irksome restraints, the incessant and unlovely toil enforced, with a

bare sufficiency of coarse food, and above all, strict cellular, solitary confinement, prolonged to periods beyond human endurance. I saw this principle carried to the last extreme when visiting the Belgian prisons, where men and women were cut off almost entirely from their fellows, alone in their cells, in the chapel, in the cubicles, in the exercising yard, seeing no one, hearing no one, conversing with no one but an occasional official for a few moments every day. Belgium has since greatly relaxed this cruel treatment, but the principle has been adopted in France, and is now being carried out with the utmost strictness when applied to first offenders—and it is only fair to admit that to save them from contamination is quite as much an object in view as to accentuate the punishment.

Imprisonment, after all, has little to recommend it, except as a means of seclusion. Its curative process, in a moral sense, has been disappointing. As a punishment it fails because, with due regard to humanity, it cannot be inflicted in its most severe form. That these ideas have come to be pretty generally accepted by us may be inferred from the great reluctance to impose it which is to be seen in these days. Intelligent legislation has been largely directed of late years to avoiding increase of the prison population. Time was when inability to pay a fine directly it was imposed meant an immediate relegation to gaol. In our days first offenders are spared imprisonment if there is reasonable hope that they will amend their ways. When we have come to acknowledge the necessity for detaining indefinitely those who persistently defy the law, we shall have arrived, as I hold, at the only logical uses of imprisonment.

In leaving this subject, I may mention that when I reached my sixtieth year I became entitled under Treasury rules to apply for my retirement, and at the close of 1899 I ceased to be one of H.M. Inspectors of Prisons, although I ever since kept up an active interest in criminal affairs.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

## MY LITERARY LIFE.

First Appearance in Print—The Writing of Novels—"Peccavi"—Military Novels—"Lola" and "A Wayward Woman"—Detective Stories—"The Rome Express"—"A Bid for Empire" and "A Woman of Business"—Military Journalism—Launching a Boys' Paper—Last Words.

FROM my earliest days I hankered after the literary life, and I have never ceased to love letters or cultivate them with ardour, if with only moderate success. A man's career is never entirely of his own choosing, but he may do something to guide and direct it. Although the force of circumstances made me first a soldier (nothing loth), and threw me next into criminal administration, I ever followed my own strong bent and bias towards literary pursuits. Like many who have gone much further and climbed much higher, I began writing in my tender years; I have by me a fragmentary history of my own family, which I began when I was only seven, and I had tried my hand also at a play about the same date. These are mere trivialities, but I may be forgiven if I record my delight at the first occasion on which I received the honours of print. In 1857 I wrote an account of the expedition to Kinburn, in which I had taken part in 1855, and it was accepted by the editor of Colborne's *United Service Magazine*. I remember that I got no "remuneration for talent."

My Staff College studies led to the production of many essays and memoirs, and my literary tastes were whetted by the example and teaching of such men as Hamley and Adams, the latter of whom was, at that time, Professor of Military History at the Cadet College; I met Charles Kingsley from time to time, and had the supreme felicity of seeing the great John Delane at his sister's house near

Ascot, and of knowing Mowbray Morris. My emulation was fired when a year or two later a fellow student, Henry Hozier, achieved the distinction of becoming *Times* correspondent in the "six weeks' war," but it was not till many years afterwards that I had the honour of seeing my own matter in large type in the columns of the great daily. My efforts were still limited to articles in the minor magazines, until at length I found myself editor of the *Gibraltar Chronicle*, and began the serious apprenticeship to journalism of which I have spoken on an earlier page.

I wrote my first novel, "Peccavi!" at Gibraltar. It cost me money to produce, for Mr. Newby, my publisher, required an advance of £50 towards the risk of bringing it out—money I never saw again. The book made no particular mark, but it won an unenviable success in coming under the ban of a prudish circulating library, which took exception to my rather too free use of the language of the camp. I argued that Thomas Atkins sometimes swore, but I am willing to admit that the pursuit of realism will not justify "swear" words in print. In these days, when novelists are legion, and of the writing of fiction there is no end, I like to look back and ask myself why I first took to story writing and have continued to labour at it for five and thirty years. I cannot pretend that I was born a novelist, or that I have achieved conspicuous success in the craft, but to produce fiction was, in a manner, forced upon me. I felt that I had something to say; I had kept my eyes open, had seen men and cities and many people, being of a curious and observant temperament, and I wanted to throw it all into narrative, yielding to an impulse that was *plus fort que moi*.

It will not be easy to placate the austere critic or the serious minded, who loftily declare that they never read novels. The first have been at some pains lately to persuade us that "the English novel is dead," or, at least, that it only survives in such vapid and decadent forms as show that it has no right to live. This is surely far-fetched and unjustifiable condemnation, and I venture to proclaim aloud that the best writers of to-day can compare favourably with the highest



standards of the past. As for the high-toned purists who scorn to waste time on fiction, the loss is theirs. The world to-day owes a debt of gratitude to those who supply an anodyne for the incessant wear and tear, the perpetual worry, the overpowering anxieties that beset us nowadays. All thanks to such writers as Kipling, Conan Doyle, Mrs. Humphrey Ward, Anthony Hope, Stanley Weyman, and the rest, who can charm us into brief forgetfulness of ourselves and our troubles by the perusal of their engrossing works. I have tried to fight like a humble soldier in the ranks, under the banner of these gifted leaders, and I fearlessly assert that any single novel of the first class will outweigh whole tons of arrogant criticism. The smallest scrap of imaginative production is worth it all.

Happily, the novelist has joys of his own that must indemnify him for much. He may writhe, if ultra sensitive, at the pin pricks of misappreciation, he may look askance at his financial returns, so strangely unequal in a profession where the chief prizes are colossal but rare, and the dead level of earnings mediocre, but nothing can rob him of the pleasures of production. The employment of his gifts, such as they are, brings its own reward. He makes and lives in his own world, peopled by his puppets, whom he can handle as he sees fit. He is the supreme arbiter of the fate of his characters, to whom he can give infinite happiness or whom he can involve in boundless despair. It is about the only *métier* a person can exercise where and how he chooses; at home or abroad, in his own snug library by his fireside, or under balmy skies, in varied and beautiful scenes. He need have no cares but his own fastidiousness, the fear that his invention lags and his powers fade, that he may fall below his best, and that some day his public may give him the go-by.

As I look back upon a somewhat lengthy period of production, it is interesting (more so to me perhaps than to my readers) to say a word or two as to my methods, the choice of my subject and its treatment. Among the various lines for adoption, between the novel historical and sentimental, the analytical and the practical, I have preferred,

as I do in reading the work of others, the novel of action and adventure. The stories I have told have been based largely upon personal experiences. I have utilised incidents I have seen and episodes through which I have passed; the characters I have put upon the stage have been drawn from real personages with whom I have been brought in contact, or whom I have had opportunities of studying. Thus, in my first story, "Peccavi," the scene was partly laid in ground familiar to me in my youth. Douglas, Isle of Man, was noted for the redundancy of its marriageable maidens, like the St. Tadds I depicted. The scene was laid partly also in the garrison towns where I had served, in barracks and mess rooms; my puppets were officers and soldiers, who played the game in which I had taken part.

It was the same in my second novel, and indeed in many succeeding ones, in which I sought my inspiration in military doings. In "The Queen's Shilling," in "The Thin Red Line" and "A Son of Mars," the two latter embracing some aspects of life in the ranks, I followed out my own early career, the adventures in flood and field that have come to me during the Crimean War. "Lola" was a faithful transcript (to the best of my ability) of life on the Rock of Gibraltar, with all its varying amusements; love, sport, and travel among the pleasantest surroundings. "A Wayward Woman" held up the mirror to that world of London art in which I lived, and from which I gained so much enjoyment for many years; and it included also episodes of travel in search of picturesque subjects for my brush.

As time passed, my horizon widened with my employment as a prison Governor and my increasing insight into crime and the ways of the criminal classes. My first serious and more ambitious effort was the "Memorials of Millbank" already described, and soon after my appointment as Inspector of Prisons I undertook the history of Newgate, that famous old gaol with traditions reaching back to the thirteenth century, and an unbroken record till its recent demolition. The work needed much more research than my "Millbank," for I had no documents ready to my hand, and I had to go far and dig deep for my materials; but "The



*Chronicles of Newgate* " has, as I may fairly say, secured a large and permanent popularity.

My acquaintance with prison matters and prison literature encouraged me to compete for the gold medal offered to all the world by the Czar of Russia (Alexander) for the best monograph upon that great philanthropist John Howard. The occasion was the centenary of his death at Kherson in 1790, and the theme covered his biography, bibliography, and a general *aperçu* of prison systems and prison reform. An honorarium of 2,000 francs (£80) was attached to the medal, and I mention it that I may quote the caustic remark made by Sir E. Du Cane on the circular issued by the Home Office announcing the competition. "If the Czar can learn how to reform his prisons at the cost of a gold medal and £80 he will get a good deal for his money." The judges appointed to award the prize could not exactly decide between my essay and that of M. Albert Rivière, an eminent French publicist, General Secretary of the Prison Society of Paris, and it ended in our being classed "equal," the cash being divided, and two medals being struck, one for each of us. Mine is, of course, a treasured possession; it bears on one side the head of John Howard, on the obverse the words: *In memoriam Johannis Howardi qui vitam suam miseris consecravat egregio hujus operum historico A. G.*

My first detective story, one of the earliest, too, of the "shilling shockers," was "Number 99," written in the manner of Gaboriau, whom I closely studied, together with Boisgobey, Eugène Chavette, and A. K. Green. "Fast and Loose" had preceded it, but it was longer and covered wider ground, and was inspired largely by my frequent visits to Paris and my acquaintance with the French police. This was my first serial, published in *Home News*, and the last that I brought out in the old three volume form. The change was already in sight, although unpalatable to the circulating libraries, but Messrs. Chapman and Hall, at my urgent representation, brought out an abridged edition of "Fast and Loose" in a paper cover, and, I believe, did well with it.

I may refer here with some pride to my "Rome Express," published by my friend John Milne, which has achieved

nine editions at various prices from half-a-crown to sixpence. It was at once the best, as I venture to think, and the most successful of all my novels. I was extremely happy in my subject, and I took immense pains with the work. The story was suggested in a *wagon-lit* journey from Rome to Paris; I got my first idea and my local colour as I journeyed on, and based my chief scenes on studies made on the spot: in the train, at the Gare de Lyons, the Morgue, and the Prefecture. As I say, I took infinite pains; it was a labour of love to recast and revise, to modify and improve the situations, and what grew out of them. In the end, before I handed the manuscript over to the printer, I had rewritten it five times.

I will spare the reader a *catalogue raisonné* of my novels, and will only add two to the list, "A Bid for Empire," and "A Woman of Business," because they support my assertion that I have chosen to write only upon matters about which I know something. The "Bid for Empire" was the outcome of many winters passed upon the Nile, the most enjoyable days I have known in a generally happy life. I had learnt the mighty river pretty well by heart, had travelled frequently up and down it by steamer and dahabeah between Cairo and Wady Halfa, lived the tourist life, made all the excursions. I was permitted to see something of the inner political workings, and met the leading spirits, diplomatic and military, that have made our occupation such a triumphant success, and I was behind the scenes of the great movement for the recovery of the Soudan. I tried to weave my knowledge of men and matters into a readable story of love and adventure, pivoting the whole upon an unworthy conspiracy of an unprincipled cadet of the Khedive's family to subvert the English predominance in Egypt.

In "A Woman of Business" I was fortified by no little experience of financial and commercial transactions. I had passed through the flame of unwise speculation, and like many another silly moth, had singed my wings badly; yet more, circumstances of a private and peculiar nature, to which I need not refer more at large, had connected me with



an important branch of London trade, and made me familiar with the details of business. Again, thanks to my friendliness with the police, I had penetrated the arcana of the Anarchical forces that burrowed deep at home and abroad, while I could draw my facts about the Camorra and the Italian prisons from my own observations at Naples.

The methods I have followed have been much the same as those of my brethren, great and small. To evolve first some general idea, some central motive, and build the story about it and into it, raising it here with the precision of a brick wall, and there fitting it into the bed rock, taking advantage of opportunities as they occur. In my humble opinion a plot ought never to be too cut and dried; it should never be worked out on too hard and fast lines. We read of novelists, and famous ones, who have worked out the whole in a preliminary skeleton, chapter by chapter, condemning the characters to speak and act as by inexorable fate, thus losing the charm of spontaneity, and sacrificing the chance of profiting by the unexpected. I have repeatedly found that the people I have called into being have refused to play their parts as I would have them, but, like sentient beings, desire to follow their own sweet will; they revolt, in fact, and sometimes run fairly away. The modern system of serialisation, however, tends rather to the fixity of the plot as planned. The demand for a dramatic situation at regular intervals has to be fulfilled, and it is in my experience no easy matter to let the curtain fall at exactly the proper moment, so as to whet the reader's appetite for "more."

Novel writing by no means monopolised my literary energies. From the time I came to London as Deputy-Governor of Millbank Prison in 1872, I sought to penetrate further into the world of letters, and succeeded at least in passing the frontier. I had much spare time on my hands, for my regular routine of duty filled only a portion of each day, and the rest was apt at times to grow monotonous. I have told how I snatched at the chance of turning the prison archives to account in the preparation of a prison history, but I was eager to do more, and I accepted every opportunity that offered in the literary line. I was always hungry for

work and went out in search of it, hunting up all I could and refusing none that came.

My earliest contributions to the London press was a series of articles on household management and cookery in the columns of the *Queen*, suggested to me by a friend who has long since gone over to the majority, and who at that time was editor of a branch of that paper. The subject was not very familiar to me, but that did not deter me from informing myself from the best sources, and ere long I could have passed an examination in the literature of the kitchen, including the works of Brillat Savarin, de la Reynière, Gouffé, Dubois, and our own Mrs. Beeton and Mrs. Glasse. I became an authority upon table decorations, and visited all the chief china shops and florists in the town. I wrote about ideals in house furnishing, about wall papers and hangings and Chippendale chairs, long before they grew into a fashionable craze. It was all fish that came to my net, and, according to order, I could descant learnedly upon Judson's dyes and Aspinall's paint, the comparative merits of kitchen ranges, and the early mysteries of moving house, now developed into almost an exact science.

I was not too proud to "write to cuts" when I got the chance. It was an amusing exercise of ingenuity to fit new stories to old illustrations, to imagine situations quite different from those which had originally inspired the artist, and I found my advantage from the facility thus acquired, when later I had to do with my boys' paper *Grip*. The more ambitious, and, I may frankly admit, the more legitimate practice was followed when I wrote several sections of "Picturesque Europe" for Messrs. Cassell, having placed at their disposal my personal experiences of travel in Spain, Sweden, and the Pyrenees, and having been associated in the task with that talented wood draughtsman, Mr. Harry Fenn. I was entrusted also with some work of a similar kind for the *Art Journal*.

It was with especial pleasure that I devoted myself to military subjects. One of my first jobs was an engagement to discuss daily, in the columns of an old-established evening paper, the varying fortunes of the Russo-Turkish War in 1876,



and about that time I began to write constantly on army topics for the *World*, and was so employed year after year, until my connection with that paper terminated in 1896. My dear old friend Edmund Yates, with whom I was on very intimate terms during the last decade of his life, trusted to me almost entirely as his military contributor, and without interfering with my more eminent colleague, Archibald Forbes, who also wrote from time to time, but was often absent. I dealt in the *World* with all the wars, great and small, that occurred between 1877 and 1894. This period embraced the years of the Zulu War, the first Boer War, the Tel-el-Kebir Campaign, the Nile Expedition, the abortive attempt to rescue Gordon, and the withdrawal from the Soudan.

I was engaged in military writing in other directions. I joined an old Staff College comrade in the management and editorship of the *United Service Gazette*, and we essayed, with no very conspicuous success, to make it the service organ. My latest connection with the purely military periodical was in assisting Sir William Howard Russell to edit the *Army and Navy Gazette*.

The first Egyptian War was the means of giving me my introduction to night journalism, an interesting and unforgettable phase of my literary experiences. I have been similarly engaged since, and for fairly long periods, but never sufficiently long quite to overcome the feeling of topsyturviness, of turning night into day, and almost entirely changing one's habits. But there is a keen satisfaction in working against time, of developing the faculty of rapid production, of turning out copy "while the boy waits," so to speak, and had I adopted journalism as a regular profession instead of acting for the most part as a free lance when occasion offered, I believe I should have preferred night work. Everything then seems to stimulate and encourage one's powers; the genius of the place, the subtle sense of strenuous effort in unceasing operation around, ever the throb of the machines and the perpetual rush to and fro, stir one's pulses, and I have never written better or so readily as at "the office" in the thick of the movement at night.

I have tried the special reporting that may be said most nearly to resemble war correspondence, and have gladly attended great parades and reviews and autumn manœuvres. The return of Lord Wolseley's army from Egypt; the fine display of Volunteers in Windsor Great Park before Queen Victoria, and that at Edinburgh, in the spacious grounds before Holyrood; the Easter operations, whether on Brighton Downs or Portsdown Hill, were opportunities not to be missed. But none compared in interest with the Salisbury manœuvres of 1898, when I accompanied Sir Redvers Buller's army, but was in close touch with the General-in-Chief, whose headquarters were within a stone's throw of where I pitched my tent. Those manœuvres will be ever memorable as having immediately preceded the South African War, in which the mimic game gave way to grim earnest, and so many lives and reputations were imperilled or lost.

There were some prophetic spirits who stood with us on Perham Down the day of the final march past, and who, viewing the columns as they filed off the ground, talked dubiously of Kruger and the Transvaal, and the day of great trial approaching. But few foresaw that that fine force of some 50,000 men would be insufficient to cope with the brave and determined enemy they were to meet, or that it would take five times their number nearly three years to win through the deadly struggle. Many of the leaders who were to be weighed in the balance—and some of them, alas! to be found wanting—were on the ground. Not a little of what has now passed into history was foreshadowed in the manœuvres of '98: mistakes that foretold regrettable incidents; fine feats of rising men, who have since reached the top of the ladder. The refined products of that fiery ordeal in South Africa were to be met with in the next manœuvres I attended, those of 1903, on Marlborough Downs, when I was greatly struck with the practised, self-reliant air exhibited by all officers who had but just been fighting in real and deadly earnest.

I was still labouring as a journeyman, a subaltern in the ranks, rendering such service as fell to my lot under the orders and control of others, when a chance came my



way of becoming editor and part proprietor of a new venture in journalism. I will confess at the outset that I knew next to nothing of the business side of the craft, absolutely nothing of the inner machinery of the methods by which a journal is produced. I was as ignorant as a child of the economic side; the prices of paper, printing, the system of publishing, the means of securing circulation, the methods of distribution, and, above all, that vital matter of obtaining advertisements. All these were like a sealed book. But I was of a sanguine nature, a typical fool, perhaps, rushing in on dangerous ground, and when this proposal was made to start a new weekly paper for boys, I gladly accepted.

A young American, rich, ambitious, and of brilliant parts, was exceedingly anxious to own one or more journals in London. He knew England well, had been educated at Eton and Oxford, and had a wide circle of English friends. I met him frequently at the house of a common acquaintance, and one day the conversation turned upon English journalism and the extraordinary success recently achieved by a certain paper with which W—— was associated. This W—— was a notable figure in the literary world, upon whom ill-health presently fell, in a measure incapacitating him from holding the chief place he had gained. I call him W——, as he is still alive and still at work. At that time he was a professional journalist, and known as one of the most brilliant writers of his day; he was on the staff of two of the greatest London newspapers, his leaders were marvels of caustic, incisive eloquence. He could treat the most widely diverse subjects, and possessed the rare gift of being able to produce the best matter in the shortest possible time.

Like myself, however, he knew nothing of the business side of journalism, or, more exactly, he thought he knew a great deal, while he was, if anything, more ignorant than I was. But he could talk as well as he could write, and whether in speech or on paper, he had the same surprising faculty of making the most of what he knew. Our American friend, whom I will call Mr. Currie, listened to

him attentively, critically at first, but as he became more and more dazzled by W——'s flow of words, with respectful, unquestioning faith. W—— adduced facts and figures of the most astonishing kind; he told us how this paper had been started upon a couple of hundred pounds, and was worth to-day thousands and thousands a year; how that paper had been bought for a song by a firm of printers who were now more than millionaires. A prize in journalism was the biggest and easiest thing to accomplish; you had only to set the ball rolling and to keep it on the move till it reached the top of the hill, after that it would go of its own accord along the smooth, level ground of good fortune.

Currie's mouth watered and his eyes glistened. He was already rich, very rich, and, like most rich men, he liked to add to his wealth. But he was one who loved to play for high stakes. A year or two before he had all but broken the bank at Monte Carlo, and he was a large operator in stocks and shares. Now he was fascinated by the golden gains to be won from journalism. He was an active man, no doubt, although in a desultory way, and he could work hard, especially if he was directing and controlling others. The rôle of master pleased him, the sense of authority and command, though his supervision degenerated at times into rather irritating interference.

When we parted, we three, it was understood that a new journal was to be founded. W—— was to seek advice as to its form and character, Currie was to advance the capital, and I was to edit and manage it. After diligent inquiry, and much consultation with experts, W—— discovered that there was no room for a newspaper except in one direction, as the organ of the benefit societies and generally of co-operation. This was a line quite beyond my experience or inclination, and I declared I must withdraw from the scheme. Then it was suggested—I cannot remember by whom, certainly not by me—that a new boys' paper would have a reasonable chance of success. The idea pleased Currie, who invited me to call on him at the Bristol Hotel and talk matters over. I found him at a table strewn with specimens of boys' literature, especially the papers which



appeared in the United States, and before I left him the general outlines of the undertaking were agreed upon between us. We were both decidedly unpractical, but I threw myself into the business heartily, and Currie, who was very keen about it, promised me his active co-operation.

Among my journalistic friends was a veteran writer, no other than George Henty, now no more, who had till lately owned and edited a boys' paper. He had not made much out of it, for I knew that it was dead. So far from being warned by his example, I hoped that there would be more room now for our venture, and I knew that I could learn much from his advice and experience. He gave me both in three words, "Don't touch it"; but when I pressed him, and when he saw that I was determined to carry out the scheme, he readily told me all he knew. I think, perhaps, he chuckled at seeing another rashly touching a thing which had already burnt his fingers; and he might perhaps have been more emphatic in his warning had he thought it was I who would be the loser. But the Yankee he thought fair game, and he knew that the Yankee's money would do some people good, although it might not make Mr. Currie's fortune. At any rate he gave me a mass of very useful information; he introduced me to his printers, who had still on hand a quantity of type suitable to the class of paper; and he gave me a list of contributors, both literary and artistic. I got from him also a notion of the proper remuneration to pay them, and as the prices expected by good draughtsmen and engravers seemed to me enormous he let me into the secret of illustration by *clichés*.

Whether or not Mr. Currie found my society agreeable, or whether there was some special attraction to him in a new enterprise, I cannot say, but he more than fulfilled his promise of assistance. Wherever I went, he wanted to go too; he had something to add to whatever I proposed, he never exactly pooh-poohed or put aside my suggestions, but he never accepted them at once, and he was always so anxious to go further and see more, that it was a wonder we ever came to any decision at all. I had been anxious, owing to the riskiness of the enterprise, to proceed

cautiously, and would have liked to put the publication and printing into the hands of a firm that produced some other journal. But this did not suit Mr. Currie. He must have his own office, his own printers; he would have liked to interview the whole of the contributors I proposed to employ, and, if it had not been too distinctly premature, he would have liked to sketch out the contents of the first number. I can see plainly that he did not trust my judgment, while our friend W—— might lead him anywhere by the nose.

W—— had a friend at Oxford, a very learned and capable Don, who expressed himself willing to help me, and I may say at once that I found him a most useful ally. But D—— (the Don) was, like W——, Currie, and myself, quite ignorant of the business side of journalism. However, it was thought advisable that he should join us in a conference, and to make matters thoroughly pleasant I gave the other three a dinner at my club. I do not suppose that the strangers' room at the old "Rag" had ever before listened to the kind of talk which went round the table for four long hours and more. We had an uncommonly good dinner and plenty of champagne. The latter may in some way explain the unpractical, not to say extravagant, schemes that were propounded and discussed. I had come prepared with several titles and draft prospectuses based upon the title which I preferred. This was *Grip*, an expression which seemed to me to embody the pluck and tenacity of English boyhood, and in a measure to typify the sturdy self-reliance which is the backbone of our national character.

Its merits were not at once admitted by my companions, but, as they had nothing better to offer, it was allowed to pass. Then they fell tooth and nail on the prospectus, and two, at least, being masters of literary criticism, they tore it pretty well to pieces. In the end, W—— said he would rewrite it next morning, a liberal offer, joyfully accepted by Mr. Currie, and, when I called next day at W——'s, he handed me the amended prospectus. Except for one or two verbal alterations, it was exactly and entirely my own! After title and prospectus, came the question of shape, size, form, and price, points upon which none of us was com-



petent to give a sound opinion. Yet W—— declared offhand it should be as large as the *Graphic*, while D—— thought it should be as small as *Punch*. The first insisted it should be printed on toned paper, the latter on hot pressed; one was certain it should have a cover, the other was equally positive there should be none. As to price, opinions were equally at variance. Almost every sum from sixpence to a halfpenny was suggested, and many abstruse calculations were made at the table, all of which were perfectly valueless even as results in arithmetic. So far the discussion that night had been mainly between W—— and D——; I had said very little, and Mr. Currie, who would have probably snubbed me if we had been alone, was so impressed by D—— and the journalist that he could only play the part of chorus to each in turn.

When W—— proposed to charge sixpence, Currie cried, "That's a good idea," in delighted approval; when D—— demurred, thinking a penny was enough, Mr. Currie veered right round and said, "That's a good idea." Everything was a good idea to him that night, from the native oysters, which he said compared not unfavourably with Blue Points, to the hansom cab that eventually took him home.

The morning after the dinner I summed up the progress made, and found that we had settled to publish on Thursdays a boys' paper to be called *Grip*, quarto size, with an ornamental cover, and in price twopence. A series of prize competitions was suggested by D—— ("That's a good idea," Currie had said) and accepted as a novel and attractive feature. Nothing else was decided upon except that there was no time to lose. It was generally agreed that if the paper was to spring soon into any circulation it must appear long before the schools broke up for the Christmas holidays. The latest date for the first number would be about the 10th November, and, as we were already in October, I saw that I should have enough to do to get all prepared. Fortunately, one obstacle to dispatch was now unexpectedly removed. Currie sent for me in hot haste, and informed me that he was going abroad, he could not say for how long, but it was an urgent summons and he must start that very day. "I

should not like to go away," he was good enough to add, "if I had not the fullest confidence in you. I consider, Major, you're more like an American than any one I've met on this side," and with this high compliment he prepared to pay me a still greater, no less than that of introducing me to his bankers and opening me a credit with them. The amount of capital to be invested had so far been only vaguely mentioned. Currie had said he was good for a few hundreds, or "even more." When we arrived at Morton, Rose and Co.'s in Bartholomew Lane, I found that the sum against which I could draw was £600—ample, as I thought then, although it was doubled before the end came.

Currie, on leaving the bankers, gave me an address, not his own, but that of agents in Paris, through whom letters would reach him. It was a slow and roundabout process, but I was only too glad to be spared his personal interference, and did not intend to communicate with him very often or very copiously by letter. I should add here, when speaking of capital, a small fact, which gave me a further insight into Currie's character. By this time I thought sufficiently well of the projected paper to risk some of my own money in it, and I offered to take a share, half or quarter, as Currie chose. But he evidently thought well of it too, for he refused to allow me to join in the enterprise, alleging the curious reason that he was bound by some promise to his father, or some deceased relative, never to take a partner in any business operation. He was not illiberal, however, as I was permitted to credit myself with a salary of six guineas a week, independently of my contributions, and, just before leaving town, he wrote me a letter promising me two-fifths of the net profits, whatever they might be.

Currie's departure left me practically unfettered, and I went ahead full speed. My days were extraordinarily busy, for I had still to make my inspections and attend at the Home Office. But I found time to interview another journalistic friend, who was at that time manager of a thriving evening paper. He took a very keen and kindly interest in my proceedings, and put one or two pertinent questions, which showed me how little I knew. I had so



far entirely neglected the great point of paper, little realising how a quarter of a farthing more or less in the ream would affect my margin of profits. Then he asked me if I had got a publisher, and went on to explain to my inexperienced mind that he meant a man to canvas for orders and control the distribution and sales. Again, had I an advertisement agent? There would certainly be room for a few advertisements, even in the first number, and by-and-by I should find this the most paying part of the paper. Had I seen Smith's people—W. H. Smith and Son in the Strand? A great deal, everything, would depend upon how many copies they would take, and the price they would pay per quire. Of course, I had a "dummy" ready? Didn't I know what that was, nor a "paste up"? Well, perhaps it was early days to talk about a paste up, but I had better not go to Smith's till I could show one, or a dummy—why, the printers ought to have seen to that. The question of the dummy brought on the question of form. My friend approved of the quarto shape—it was the only one; but he was not in favour of the cover, and he shied altogether at the published price. "Your cover will cost you money in a dozen ways, you must have a taking illustration, the paper itself will cost extra, and the printers will charge more for folding; I should discard the cover and charge a penny for the paper. Twopence is an impossible price; it does not exist in the paper trade, you will find it only a nuisance, and it will set all the retail booksellers against you."

One other point he strongly impressed upon me, the need for advertising the venture largely in every way, so far as my means would allow. Then he gave me an introduction to Willing, another to his paper makers in Cannon Street, and I left him with a deep sense of gratitude and a conviction that I had got more from him in half an hour than Currie, W——, and D—— could have told me in a week, if at all.

I went straight to Willing's, and I have still a lively recollection of the prompt and courteous attention I received there. Ways and means were briefly but decisively discussed; the methods of advertisement, the expense. I was promised a number of gigantic posters and placards to be

exhibited, some on omnibus knife-boards, some at railway stations, some on street hoardings, the whole to be maintained for a period of three months at a cost of £150. This was just a quarter of my whole capital, but I accepted the tender, although not without qualms. I was in a measure rewarded by the almost instantaneous publicity given to the project. The magic word *Grip*—and my first notices were limited to the simple monosyllable alone—attracted universal attention; it was at once mysterious and striking, the great end to obtain in preliminary advertisement. All through, Messrs. Willing served me well; at the last they were as considerate and forbearing as they were active in my interests from the first. Through them, too, I made the acquaintance of a clever young artist, who was to illustrate for me, where *clichés* would not serve, at a very moderate price. I did not feel that he was quite equal to designing the cover, and for this work I sought out a well-known comic artist near Primrose Hill.

This was the well-known and ill-fated Fred Barnard, whose very promising career was so prematurely cut short; a humorist of the first order, and, personally, as amusing as his work. I found him in his studio drawing from a model; he was in his dressing gown and slippers, but he received me very cordially, and, after declining my offer on the ground that he was too busy, he kindly offered to introduce me to a friend, no other than Harry Furniss. Barnard's time was so precious that he went out just as he was, in his *déshabillé*, and escorted me through the streets to the other studio, where I soon came to terms. Furniss did me an admirable block, choosing, at my suggestion, Barnaby Rudge, with the magpie "*Grip*" pecking at his heels. It was a fine bit of work, and when printed on staring rose-coloured paper, looked well at the book stalls. Harry Furniss also did me a series of "*Boy Types*," which added greatly to the artistic merits of the paper.

At last, after a fierce struggle against time, and almost inconceivable difficulties and delays, the hour of birth was at an end. Now a last supreme, and, for a time it seemed insurmountable, obstacle, intervened. I was taken seriously



ill. A violent attack of epistaxis laid me low for a week, with all the concomitant discomfort of "plugging," and the rest. I was forbidden to attend to any business whatever, and the day for the appearance of the first number was at hand. I can never forget what I owed to the staunch and timely help of my good colleague, the ill-fated Archibald McNeil,\* whose assistance I had secured some time before on the staff of the paper, and who now stepped into the breach, and nobly carried me through the trouble.

In the midst of it all, my "proprietor" turned up, in a most unhappy frame of mind. His money was at stake, success was imperilled; he could not decide how to act. At first he proposed to abandon the scheme, to which my dear wife, who was obliged to replace me at the interview, heartily agreed. But Mr. Currie at once shifted his ground, and could not bring himself to sacrifice the outlay already incurred, nor, in the second place, the hopes he had formed of a substantial return. Thanks to my friend McNeil, the paper came out, and I was soon sufficiently recovered to take my place and proper share in its conduct and control, nursing it, like a weakly bantling, into a life that was never vigorous, though with due tendance and nourishment it might have become so.

*Grip* ran for three months, and then died honourably, with its face to the foe, died owing no man a farthing, except Mr. Currie, and to a smaller extent, myself. My American capitalist had only himself to thank for the loss he made. He had launched a second venture about the same time, on a much more ambitious scale, and had advanced a much larger sum to found it. I do not think the *Pioneer*, as it was called, the proposed organ of the benefit societies, ever won its way far, but I do know that *Grip* was just beginning to pay when it was dropped. I like to look back and to flatter myself that I had hit upon a plan which, intelligently and adequately adopted, has brought vast wealth to others

\* The tragic circumstances under which McNeil met his death at Boulogne, where he disappeared, will not be readily forgotten. After many days of impenetrable mystery his murdered corpse was at last picked up on Boulogne Sands.

more fortunate than Mr. Currie. *Grip* took the field contemporaneously with *Tit Bits*, of the existence of which I had not the slightest idea, and, like that novel publication, I sought to enlighten, if not to fill its pages, with extracts and scraps from here, there, and everywhere. I had to thank Mr. Currie for bringing the best and liveliest of American journals to my notice, and I was among the first to draw from their columns the very readable and attractive kind of matter which has been the backbone of papers that are now great properties.

Since *Grip* I have assisted at the creation of other journals, and when I realise the broad foundations on which they were laid, the intimate, expert knowledge, the accurate and extensive calculations that preceded expenditure, the strict watch kept upon outgoings, I am aghast at my temerity in embarking almost single-handed upon such a troublous sea.

Few writers of fiction will care to deny that they have tried their hand at playwriting. I am at least open to confess that I have made many attempts at it, and I will add my experience to that of numberless comrades and friends—that it is far easier to write than to secure the acceptance and production of a play. I was successful on the first occasion for the simple reason, as I have said,\* that I had no one to consult but myself. My only other dramatic success I owed, no doubt (and I gladly admit it), to my collaborator Mr. C. J. Dickinson. It was no more than a humble curtain-raiser, *The Rift within the Lute*, the original idea of which was suggested by a story in the Italian, "Un Intervento," by Matilde Sarao, and which, when worked out, found favour with two London managers, Mr. Charles Hawtrey at the Avenue Theatre, and Mr. Weedon Grossmith at the Comedy. I wrote two or three plays in collaboration with Mr. Arthur Law, but none has seen the light, although I assailed many managers, pursued Mr. Wilson Barrett behind the scenes of the Adelphi, and shared sumptuous breakfasts with Sir Augustus Harris in St. John's

\* See ante, *Los Dos Sordos*, page 140.



Wood. Since then, very much for my own amusement or the excusable wish to work out an idea, I have laboured steadily on, now at historical drama, now at drawing-room comedy, again at curtain-raisers and comic opera; but my bantlings still lie at the bottom of my desk, having there found a haven of rest after many fruitless wanderings. If this should meet the eye of any actor-manager or impresario in search of a play, as I have been told is their chronic condition, they may have something that may suit them on application to me!

I have already referred to my prison books, but would like to add to the list the latest and most important of them, "Mysteries of Police and Crime,"\* in which I endeavoured to give a *résumé* of the more serious cases of wrong-doing in all countries and from the earliest date. It has passed through four editions in various forms, and it has won for me the unenviable experience of having to defend an alleged libel, a suit in which I was successful after appearing in the witness-box for the first, and I trust only, time in my life.

In closing these pages I must leave it to my readers and critics to decide whether my life story was worth the telling. All I can claim for this record is that it is at least varied, and often covers new ground; it deals with many strange characters, strange episodes, strange facts mostly within my own personal experience, and so far uncommon as to be, I hope, not uninteresting. I have enlarged, I hope not unduly, upon some topics that I have always had closely at heart, and have tried to elucidate some of the more pressing problems in prison administration. If I have been too outspoken, at times too frivolous in my desire to lighten my story, I have at any rate been always honest, I have sought to

"extenuate nothing,  
Nor set down aught in malice."

\* Cassell & Co., 1898.

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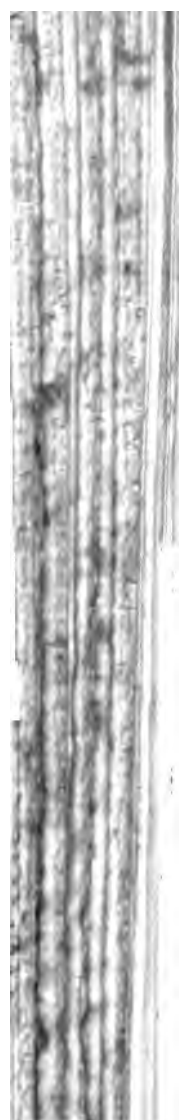
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